Q46

Please provide any comments about your experiences during your time at EPA that demonstrate support for or a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at the Agency, and why.

1 My own scientific analyses were not altered inappropriately and i felt comfortable raising concerns with my managers, but I witnessed several things that concerned me. (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted]

2 I HAVE WORKED WITH VARIOUS SCIENTISTS OVER THE YEARS, THEY ALL SEEMTO SUPPORT ABOVE.

3 I couldn't be more satisfied with senior staff on down to first line supervisors in my (b) (6) Scientific Integrity is supported at all levels. Regional Lab staff must take the Agency ethics training, Scientific Integrity and a separate course on Lab ethics. All to support the accreditation of our work by ISO 17025, as well as to enhance our reputation for quality and integrity.

4 There was nothing I experience first hand, but it felt like there was an overall lack of scientific integrity at the Agency level due to policy's implemented

5 It is challenging to make progress when the release of data and results are delayed by unnecessary review of routine products by upper management.

6 (b) (5) [redacted] at expense of neutral academic research.

7 (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted]

8 I am very involved in the enforcement data certification process during mid and end of fiscal year and, it is extremely important to ensure the data, especially when performing calculations to report injunctive relief for both administrative and judicial cases, is accurate and complete.

9 There has been a lack of support in (b) (6) for the last 10 years, since the Obama administration where decisions tracked with the desires of certain environmental NGOs and Democratic politicians regardless of scientific integrity. The same can be said for the last two years except the shift was in the opposite direction, where decisions tracked with desires of industry NGOs and Republican politicians.

10 A lack of support generally relates to two things 1) rapid turn-around time required for analyses forces abbreviated analyses and 2) reticence to "rock the [policy] boat" from the region even when scientific analyses strongly support a different approach than a national approach. Local conditions do not always comply with national policy choices made decades ago and our local leaders often do not want to amend their positions even when presented with the data and information. Change has to come from the bottom up (how science operates), but leaders may feel fearful to suggest change even in the face of a set of facts that would strongly support a change.

11 Please provide more funding for this area

12 My work overlapped technically with concerns about (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted] but I received conflicting messages about what I could say publicly about the overlap for a few months in 2020. Eventually that became clearer.

13 I generally believe my Center level management, and even Office level, support strong scientific activity and integrity. I have heard of some instances where outside Offices have made edit suggestions that were borderline scientific integrity issues, and slowing the clearance process. This type of issue has not happened to me directly, and has not happened in the last year, but our management was supportive of the scientific integrity and supported the scientists in reaching a satisfactory outcome. Knowing that my management is supportive of these initiatives is a positive thing in my work-life.

14 It's clear to all us citizen's that the highest levels of EPA have not demonstrated support for a culture of scientific integrity. Confidence has been lost for the EPA's science

15 Many times I felt pressured by the (b) (6) political leadership to conduct my core responsibilities without time tested EPA processes. I also was left out of some major decisions that I strongly believe negatively impacted the agency and the quality of our work.

16 Since joining the Agency a few months ago I've had the opportunity (that supports a culture of scientific integrity) to review EPA's scientific integrity through training and also presentations.

17 I believe support was demonstrated.

18 My own experience was in difficulty getting quality assurance documents approved for my grantees, and lack of tracking/accountability for the grantee agencies to keep their documents up to date, long review time by the quality assurance team. I did hear that there seemed to be more of a lack of scientific rigor and disregard for scientific integrity at the HQ level where there were more implications for policy.

19 In my support role within (b) (6) [redacted] my immediate supervisor and colleagues show strong support for a culture of scientific integrity. We are committed to excellence in site data management, and continuous improvement.. My immediate supervisor promotes rigor and accuracy in our work.

20 The lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at EPA during 2019-2020 obviously was based on political leadership. (b) (5) [redacted]

21 No Basis top Judge

22 (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted]

23 (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted] This was in 2017. I don't feel that our regional laboratory has sufficient controls in place to ensure integrity. Our political leadership in the last four years was very biased and resulted in very flawed rule making that was embarrassing for the agency. Examples include the (b) (5) [redacted] Reports were stuck in management for over a year, and only with a change of administration were they released to the public. Our region does not place a priority on publication of our scientific products.

24 (b) (6) second line leaders only care about shorter report timeframes. (b) (6) [redacted]. Managers only care about new time-lines that they came up with. This has ruined our ability to provide the specialized work we were used to doing. Direct and second line supervisors are unethical, retaliatory, and bullying but no matter who or what looks into the situation, no changes are made by (b) (6) [redacted] senior managers. OIG, Scientific Integrity, (b) (6) [redacted], state and local regulatory organizations. Staff have given up on improvements being made as managers are not held to the same standard as staff and are not held accountable. The majority of staff are actively looking for alternative employment and (b) (6) will not recover. This is very sad for an organization that had a stellar reputation before current management came in. I am looking for another position outside of (b) (6) [redacted]

25 Ensure CSFs conform with registrants claims

26 Pass

27 I do not do science

28 (b) (5) [redacted]

29 I am not comfortable describing specific experiences since trust needs to be built with managers that there will be no overt or subtle consequences for scientists speaking out. Subtle consequences could result for people in the organization who are viewed as making waves, viewed as troublemakers, or publicly describing issues/problems, including reduced opportunities and funding for their work. As shown by the Employee Viewpoint Surveys, there is some lack of trust between staff and senior managers and political appointees. An organization that values honest input on scientific integrity would work to build trust and protect people from both overt and subtle retaliation. There are numerous publicly known examples in the past few years where Agency scientist or career staff were not included in decision-making, or their scientific information was not used appropriately. There are likely other occurrences that never became publicly known. And, there is the consequence of scientists and managers not being willing to speak up. (b) (6) [redacted] Once again, the scientific integrity policy seems to be based on the willingness and integrity of people to uphold it, with little consequence to those who don't - particularly at the political appointee level.

30 The retirement of people in science advisory positions after they interacted with the politicals in the agency. This showed that the meddling of the politicals was more and worse than at other times.

31 The annual FMFIA assurance process requires a Scientific Integrity questionnaire which my office completes each year. Many staff have completed the scientific integrity training course.

32 it is modest; well aware of past data suppression
33
I've experienced upper level management (DD level and higher) requiring changes to portions of regulatory decision documents without allowing or considering input from the science team. Some of the changes are subtle and some are more obvious. Some of the changes were clearly political above and beyond what I've seen before. (The most worst of these were from higher level political appointees.) Last, I've seen more sloppy work in attempts to meet deadlines. We are never given extra time to make statutory deadlines, despite staff shortages, hiring freezes, and long government shutdowns. EPA staffers are dedicated and work all hours, weekends, holidays, and compressed days to get the job done. It's very stressful.
34
Political appointees highjacked the(b) (5) The workgroup was on the verge of eliminating exposure in drinking water. (b) (6), (b) (5) They used EPA's must get your presentation approved by managers as the excuse to report it. They abused this policy. Recommended this policy be changed that peers approve managers are made aware of it to avoid abuse of authority.
35 Witnessed on going communication between the lab, project officers, sample collection coordinators and samplers to insure we would receive samples properly collected and handled, in the correct containers and amounts needed to generate the highest quality data.
36 There is essentially lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity because manager scientists put the pressure on the staff scientists to ease up on the companies. There are always staff scientists on their sides for their egos and success.
37
I believe in general that the scientists, immediate supervisors, and people tasked with giving us guidance for scientific rigor and integrity (QA, contracts, safety, etc) are sincere in their efforts and believe in the mission of EPA. The biggest problem I've seen is that when(b) (6) (b) (5) (b) (6) has a disproportionate amount of money and freedom to hire compared to the rest of(b) (6) which actually produces better quality science.(b) (6) was hired to keep animal researchers from the table when decisions and documents were made. The last administration made decisions based on politics, but the internal weakness was already there.
38 (b) (5), (b) (7)(A) -- lack of support
39 during the past four years there seemed to be a increased required involvement in the program offices in reviewing all scientific products coming out of(b) (6) Review concerning policy statements may be warranted. However, there appeared to be months-long delays in reviews and(b) (6) management seemed to tolerate the delays.
40 Previous RA decided not to support EPA's proposed action that was contrary to a state's position despite being presented with the scientific justification for EPA's proposed action
41 I experienced a lack of support most directly by the additional, high-level reviews that were required for ALL documents and presentations. Information that didn't "stick to the script" was edited or denied permission.
42
The message seems to be that only work performed by scientists in(b) (6) is of value. Although this may not be factually true, efforts by other scientists in the Agency are not necessarily encouraged. However, I am definitely NOT making any suggestion that scientific integrity is compromised. My suggestion is for greater support for scientists in EPA who have roles which are not research-centric.
43 N/A
44

The review processes of(b) (6) and program office journal articles must be streamlined, and reviewing managers should only be reviewing for hidden policy statements that might be taken as "EPA says". It is troubling that an(b) (6) scientist had to go through sometimes 8 or 10 different levels/types of reviews to ensure they were sanitized to be consistent with EPA positions, yet they must put in the disclaimer to the effect of "these thoughts represent the opinions of the authors". While(b) (6) managers have upheld the highest ethical standards in the face of real challenges in my opinion, just the review process alone has a chilling (and slowing) effect on production of scientific materials. It is appropriate for EPA-branded products to go through multiple reviews at the direction of political and career leadership, so long as scientific findings are not altered by nonscientists for political or policy purposes. However, journal articles or similar that are personally attributable should go through a technical review to ensure quality, but should not go through review cycles that take months to conclude. The(b) (6) policy review process of(b) (6) products requires(b) (6) office director sign off - ODs and their deputies have more important things to do than that, and it requires every layer of manager below them to review it. Furthermore, under the last administration, senior career managers were held personally responsible if something perceived as adverse to the Administration's stated positions was published, and a culture of fear was persuasive. We must break from that mentality. Delegate reviews of scientific products to the division level or lower as appropriate (and free ODs to do the important work on their plate). And make very clear in the Agency that if an author makes a mistake on a personally attributable product, the author may be held accountable if appropriate; the programs or senior managers leading them will not be. Submitting a staff-authored, personally attributable article to a journal should not need months (or years) in a review chain; the fact that the external peer review process is the easy part says how over the top our internal reviews have become.
45 I mean, the glaring example of a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity is that all references to(b) (5) EPA websites were modified to remove important information.
46 Two risk assessment documents changed major conclusions to be less health protective based on political decisions; one risk assessment document held up and not released
47 I have generally found the Agency to be supportive of scientific integrity.
48 I have been extremely pleased with the attention to upholding the highest level of scientific integrity in(b) (6). However, the Agency needs stronger safeguards for ensuring that scientific integrity is protected. Also, scientific advisory boards play a crucial role in scientific review and should be buffered from political manipulation.
49
I have several staff members working on sensitive issues such as(b) (5). EPA political appointees required changes to presentations to water down the findings, despite sound science behind them.
50 I have none.
51 In short, the agency has policies and procedures to support scientific integrity and the staff try to follow them. The political appointees in the last administration did not appear to feel bound by those policies and procedures and seemed to be guiding the science towards their political agenda. The degree to which the career staff didn't adhere to principles of scientific integrity was related to the influence of the political appointees.
52
(b) (6) .
53 (b) (5)
54 (b) (5) .
55
In the past and currently(b) (5) . Instead of incorporating current science into decisions senior managers support excluding technical staff who provide it. Technical staff believe that they need to avoid publication in the open literature especially when the science contradicts policy decisions. Staff do not feel it is safe to disagree. Experience with scientific integrity complaints is that there is effect. It is generally understood that there is nothing the scientific integrity official can do about it except provide lip service. It is generally recognized that Management does not need to incorporate scientific integrity into decisions. There is no down side for them to ignore it. Actions continue to not match the words in the policy. Staff do not feel that they are not protected from retribution. Filing a complaint, state opposing opinions, pointing out that a policy decision goes against science, or other science integrity actions have resulted in people being punished in subtle and and in open ways. I and others fear that there is no expectation that responses will be anonymous. Complaints are expected to be shared with managers and the source of the complaint also. The concept of "whistle blowers are always punished" applies to scientific integrity as well based on past experience and current practice.
56
The agency was led by former lobbyists with a clear objective to benefit specific industries at the expense of human health and the environment. The agency was forced to weaken regulations. Many initiatives which could could have led to beneficial impacts in regulated areas were abandoned as having no chance of even being launched in the political atmosphere of the 2019-2020 period.
57
The previous administration made decisions from a place of politics rather than science on too many occasions. This did not affect my project work as much as others, but it was felt through out EPA. My Division and Office leadership did a lot to safeguard integrity. So far, I feel the current administration is doing more to support scientific integrity and openness in the agency.
58
lack of support - last administration did not appear to be fully committed to scientific integrity, science data or facts when making executive orders, policy, rules, guidance, decision making, etc.
59 (b) (6) has always supported scientific integrity and promotes it frequently.
60 The Administrator published a memorandum indicating that mammalian research would be reduced by 50% by 2025 and gone by 2030 even when the scientists were saying they didn't have appropriate tools to meet this goal and that the tools in development would not be adequate for that timeline. At the same time, that Administrator publicly accepted awards from animal rights groups for that memorandum. Good publicity for the Administrator, poor science protecting the public. There was (and is) pressure on the scientists to develop and use "NAMs" (Non-Animal Models/New Approach Methods) and document the reduction in mammalian use at the Agency. This pressure wasn't/isn't driven by the science, but by political pressure and publicity. FWIW,(b) (6) has been developing NAMs for decades and the use of mammals has been dropping accordingly, but only to the point where sound science could still protect human health and the environment. The political pressure did nothing helpful.
61
(b) (5), (b) (6)

62 During an IRIS-related audit, (b) (5) This type instance was probably encountered at the HQ level as well, especially given the political environment involving a number of EPA positions that may have pitted scientific integrity against business/political forces.

63 Although decisions within the Agency are not required to follow the science, our Agency's reputation and success is based on the strength of our science and our integrity in producing the findings

64 Deadwood advancing due to favoritism. Age discrimination prevalent, tolerated and tacitly approved. Only "new" young staff and sycophants receiving recognition and advancements.

65 I support scientific integrity at the EPA, many of my collogues with science or science influenced positions were sidelined. I do not have much interaction with this work and collaborate on voluntary programs, so much of this interference has not impacted me.

66 N/A

67 A scientist from my workplace was scheduled to give a talk to a local state government agency, but was prohibited from doing so by people at the highest levels of the agency because the talk included mention of (b) (5), (b) (6) , although no official explanation was ever offered. Cowardice.

68 My supervisor is always looking for the facts and the support for them so to equip decision makers.

69 (b) (5)

70 (b) (6) does a good job of communicating opportunities for scientific projects and encourages people to apply. I think that demonstrates support for a culture of scientific integrity in a more general way.

71 (b) (5), (b) (6)

72 Scientific opinions are shared and can disagree, each side has an opportunity to share supporting evidence before a decision is made. Sometimes dissenting opinions or contradiction's are not made at the time or in person, but later. Could be other considerations for timing of the admission but it is still made.

73 There are staff in regions and at HQ that base policy decisions not on science, but solely on the interests of industry and suppress those that share scientific findings that might challenge that current policy. I have witnessed a gross violation of scientific integrity from regions and especially at the highest levels.

74 I was working on one particularly difficult issue. The support I received from the national experts was fantastic and in the spirit of scientific integrity. What the political appointees and upper management in my Division decided to do with the information provided to them demonstrated a particular lack of support for scientific integrity as it was counter to their desired outcome.

75 The past four years was the worst years for transparencies and integrity. Look at the people that was hired to run the angency.

76 Support 1. Able to co-author two well recognized multi-agency technical documents. 2. Collaboration with (b) (6) and (b) (6) needs for emerging contaminants. Resulted in providing irrefutable evidence to the State to pursue responsibly parties, and for ORD to publish two articles in the Environmental Science Journal and expecting as much as four more manuscripts to be published. Lack of Support 1.Technical scientific Guidance Document Needs- EPA Staff overwhelmed and don't need to add another document on their desk for review. 2. No need for EPA to develop regulatory standards because specific emerging contaminants are not a national concern, rather state-specific concerns. When in fact they are of a national concern.

77 Working on technical documents that were submitted to political review by previous administration political. They would erase the rigorous technical analysis from the documents and turn around documents with the absolute legal bare minimum.

78 Internal audits of scientific reports; OIG audit of overall operations.

79 Political, rather than scientifically-sound, judgements and other decision making at the (b) (6) level had been unchecked for 4+ years. Prior, Regional Administrator decision making was likewise unchecked.

80 We need to get more time to study more.

81 Nothing specific

82 I have only been with the EPA (b) (6) so don't know, or have not been exposed to many of the situations yet. Part of the reason for wanting a position with the EPA is for the high level of scientific integrity.

83 I remain disappointed EPA's senior career officials sat silently by as Trump political appointees did their best to dismantle the Agency. The main reason we have a civil service system...in which employment is protected against political retaliation...is for senior career officials to act with integrity instead and PROTECT the Agency against this very threat. Those SESers who remained silent should be embarrassed about their negligence in standing up for scientific integrity, financial integrity, and every other way in which they failed to act in accordance with their duties and responsibilities. Silence = Complicity.

84 (b) (5)

85 generally pretty good but not perfect, especially with the political appointees, some folks just aren't interested or don't understand science, so there's sometimes communication issues

86 We were constantly pressured to take positions contrary to those supported by the science. Working for the Trump/Wheeler administration was the most demoralizing 4 years of my (b) (6) year experience at EPA, and that includes the George W. Bush years, which is saying something (really bad).

87 The agency's COVID approach has been all over the map, and most recently, surprisingly schizophrenic in combining CDC guidance, union negotiations, emerging science, and varying employee and program risk tolerance. Employees currently don't have to wear masks if vaccinated in federal space, but have to wear masks at all times when traveling, get RA approval to travel anywhere, and follow the outdated summer/fall 2020 field guidance for site work. That guidance says employees will be tested on long deployments, but CDC guidance says vaccinated employees can travel at will and don't need to quarantine or test post travel/exposure, and we're told to follow both. Schizophrenic. The response program successfully managed hundreds of staff from all over the country in the west coast fires response during worsening virus conditions that were much worse than current and no vaccine availability. Now, vaccines are widely available, COVID conditions have drastically improved, and we're still pretending it's last October because of politics and bureaucratic inertia. Any discussion on scientifically-based decision making in the face of the agencies continued behavior is laughable. (b) (6) but it's not confidence building that agency leaders even know what science is.

88 I think the basis for support or a lack thereof depends on the Administration. Some political appointees are willing to consider the information in a transparent way, while others prejudge the information without understanding it to make decisions. As staff, we have no choice but to do what the Administration decides, even if it is scientifically indefensible and leaves us legally vulnerable. Career staff and managers in (b) (6) seem to recognize how challenging that can be for staff but often do not do anything to encourage a shift in the culture at upper management or political appointee levels.

89 The agency level roll backs on Obama era policies and the (b) (5) . We are supposed to conduct and report research to protect the environment / people, reversing and halting research that impacts the global good is a slap in the face to scientists working hard and who have worked hard to generate data in support of (b) (5)

90 The Agency's lack of interest and support for fact-finding, discussion and debate compromised the development of fact and solid enforcement.

91 I've observed political interference in scientific documents under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Sometimes it is subtle (e.g., not releasing information because of concerns over "messaging"), and sometimes it is overt (e.g., we want policy X, so make sure the science is presented in such a way that it supports policy X). These directions can come from both political and career senior leaders. Career senior leaders can do this either as a result of political direction or through their own choices (i.e., not political direction). There are often shades of grey that can make the landscape especially difficult to navigate for staff and managers, and it's not clear to me that there is an "easy" fix for this issue.

92 Requirements in taking Scientific Integrity training, especially by ALL managers or supervisors. Critical to be reminded and keep it in the forefront of requirements.

93 I believe that a number of cases where I provided a less that strongly agree answer to a question are the consequence of our having to work remotely over a long time period and not having the opportunity to have a face to face discussion about points of possible disagreement.

94 There is an overwhelming burden on the employee or staff member to demonstrate to others the SI issue. The staff member carries the weight of the scientific integrity complaints. The staff member is encourage to resolve the SI because of the caseload of the SI staff and the additional work required by managers to investigate.

95 I believe in EPA, their scientists, and collaborators. They continue to apply Scientific Integrity to everything they do. The last few years were hard, (b) (5) I look forward to watching them master this effort. They are committed to Excellence, I trust what they do, I watch them from the sideline do their job, it makes me proud to be a part of this EPA Team!

96 (b) (5)

97 I feel overlooked for work performance the additional duties applied to my desk. I have no idea other than I am a minority of color and age.

98 Many rulemakings went forward at EPA during the 2019-2020 time period without sufficient scientific evidence, demonstrating lack of scientific integrity in a manner affecting the wider public.

99 Training and distribution of information from Regional Scientific Integrity Officer as well as appropriate information disseminated by same person. Availability of this individual to meet and discuss any concerns, shows support on a regional basis

100 One concern I have as a researcher, which may not be fully captured by the questions thus far in the survey, is about the approach to new studies. I feel there is increasing pressure to structure research with target policy goals in mind. The conclusions and policy implications may be correct, but if there was bias in the underlying approach recourse is far more limited.

101 EPA is not the scientific agency we think we are. There is a very narrow view focused on the hard sciences. People who are not working in scientific or engineering positions have been limited in their professional growth for years. There is a lot of science-related, but not direct scientific work occurring, and it is disregarded. The scientific integrity should include how we are making decisions across the Agency. So many decisions seem to be based on opinions. When we create something that is not rigorous, we do not correct.

102 Comments are often given verbally rather than in a memo or track-change format. This leaves no trail or documentation of the reasons for changes being made. I am not sure if the supervisor is just lazy or doing something wrong knowingly. Decisions seem to be made arbitrarily, often due to the lack of meeting notes or other administrative records. (b) (5), (b) (6) until this year. Not knowing is no reason to not follow the laws of the country. It also leaves the agency open to lawsuits. It often seems like funding decisions are made based on who are friends or golf buddies with the branch chief. (b) (6), (b) (7)(A) EPA funds poor performing and outrageously expensive projects through this process.

103 it has gotten worse over the decades and there is always an excuse, our (b) (6) letters are essentially pablum and getting weaker every year, we no longer reach out and work with other agenciew, we kowtow

104 (b) (5), (b) (6)

105 No Comments

106 It was my experience that a controversial scientific issue/conclusion in which I was involved was evaluated thoroughly by (b) (6) experts at the direction of (b) (6) management, and the results of that evaluation were published in a peer reviewed journal.

107 Political pressure is always present. It also comes from the top. If we in the regions feel that our colleagues in Washington are being pressured, we feel that pressure empathetically and realistically. How do we push the issue when our HQ colleagues are being persecuted on science issues?

108 (b) (6) is a great example of supporting a culture of scientific integrity in (b) (6) . I have also experienced caution from some managers that are overly cautious about releasing scientific information. My experience is that over my time here, the trend has been towards more transparency in science, and that the trend is moving in the right direction, but improvement takes time and effort.

109 I've met one person in (b) (6) that supports scientific integrity, but he's a lone voice and has limited ability to make the case. If anything (b) (6) has a culture of a LACK of integrity. Managers are more concerned about pushing their narrative. I've had multiple products, some driven by consent decree, mired in low level review for years (despite multiple peer reviews, really good comments from peers on the quality of the work, etc.) simply because it could be viewed as not supporting a decision that was made, even though the work was done before those decisions were supposed to be made. I'm on the umpteenth revision of a manuscript the aforementioned managers don't like. It stays in internal management review so long, I need to periodically update references etc. That then require a do over of the process so it's a real catch 22. These managers have unilaterally decided what's scientific or not. When meeting with them to discuss the technical background, I've been yelled at, told that the analyses are 'scientifically invalid,' and accused of revisionist history when explaining how we got where we are. These people lack an adequate understanding of the science, but when one tries to brief them on it and provide materials to help them, they lash out. My supervisor assigned me a review of a science product without adequate time to do it. The product had serious errors. I had to work late and weekends to provide accurate information only to be told 'This is not what I want!' My input was immediately thrown out and I was told I had to support what I was given. A state of the science review was conducted to support risk assessment. Low level managers don't agree that states should have flexibility in decision making nor have the science support this review provides. That's not upper mgmt saying that, but 1st and 2nd line managers. But, they effectively suppress these materials for years and 'manage up' in the meantime. The science (over decades) has consistently reported results that demonstrate past and current Agency recommendations/decisions are not protective, but we're not allowed to discuss, quantify, or publish anything that might call these decisions into question. It's not a political thing; it's been going on for over a decade. We're putting people at risk and telling them it's OK. We're taking informed consent away from parents who end up exposing their children to high risk situations. We're putting EJ communities at risk. We have had the tools to decrease exposure, better inform the public and better allow states to prioritize these scenarios, but these people are more concerned about optics and not shining light on bad decisions.

110 We have never had such a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at the Agency as we experienced in 2019-2020.

111 Did not experience anything, just heard some colleagues' experiences

112 Research was completed and a product to disinfect N-95 respirators was developed. Management would not release it for unknown reasons.

113 Some items appear to have been delayed or modified prior to release to public

114 The people I work with who are actively engaged in scientific inquiry and publication have held their work to the highest standards. However, political pressure at high levels against using science for decision-making impeded the degree to which that good science was able to inform policy.

115 Scientific Integrity was only ever brought up at the end of the year with a request for input from HQ. The individual assigned to tackle the review was always the last to know

116 (b) (5)

117 I have published my research in peer-reviewed scientific journals and through EPA reports without any obstacles or issues. If there were any, none bordered on the scientific integrity

118 I'm not even sure where to begin, there were so many violations and lack of support for scientific integrity at all levels across the agency, including the scientific integrity officials themselves, and in so many different forms. It clearly demonstrated to me that scientific integrity was only important when a pro-science administration was in office and could be abandoned at any time, even by the scientific integrity officials and representatives within the offices. I want to be able to tell young scientists that the government and EPA is a good place to work, where their science will be valued and used. But right now, that isn't true. (b) (6), (b) (5) The general attitude of multiple employees over the last couple years was that we were all on our own, and that we should just do the things we want to do and hide it from our bosses. Speak at the events or agree to the publication opportunities that came your way, but hide it from your boss. If you didn't ask the supervisors their permission, then they would have plausible deniability. This fostered further distrust and a culture that included a wide gulf between managers and employees. - Multiple requests were sent to managers to help us understand the training forms for how to request funds for external courses or other professional development opportunities. These requests were never addressed and we were told to stop asking - that it was something we had to figure out on our own.

119 Political appointees altered scientific conclusions of staff scientists. EPA products were held back for fear of political interference

120 There is huge support regionally and I'm sure to the scientists in offices as well, but there seems to be a huge thought and some proof that the political appointees during the last administration got in the way

121 The previous presidential administration and EPA administer was clearly at odds with the mission and purpose of the agency, especially on subjects like (b) (5) . This makes the agency look bad and undermines our purpose.

122 See previously described experiences.

123 For most of my career which was in (b) (6) the staff did follow the science. We had scientific experts to assure any assertions made in a law suite were correct. Our attorneys were careful to assure the science was correct. There was a strong synergy between (b) (6) .

124 N/A

125 policy implications seem to matter over science
126 Best place and working for the betterment of environment.
127 Other than hearsay, I have no basis to comment on this.
128
Strong support for scientific basis in decision making however some folks who claim science have such strong bias for personal agenda they are unwilling to respond to scientific information.
129
(b) (6) served as a choke point in the review of numerous scientific documents for unclear reasons. In one instance, (b) (5), (b) (6)
130 I am a new hire. Everyone I work with has scientific integrity. I do know that everyone gets influenced when a (b) (6) goes to higher management and complains and then that action gets pushed forward/front of the line.
131
(b) (5)
132 n/a
133 none
134 (b) (5)
135 I heard or read about a lot of negative issues associated with EPA s scientific integrity and its being compromised but I didn t have any personal experience in this regard. But I work in (b) (6) and so was not particularly connected to the scientific work of the Agency.
136 (b) (5) So did the myriad news articles that reported on how our scientists were retiring or quitting and how findings were being suppressed or outright ignored to promote political agendas.
137 It does not apply to my position.
138 Began working for EPA this year (2021)
139 Voluntary programs data is very uneven in integrity
140
A note about the previous several questions. They all start out with "thinking back over the past two years...." and then ask several questions about management, career leadership and political leadership. Our political leadership has taken a drastic change over the past two years, so it's very challenging to answer those questions. I framed my answers thinking about the political leadership over the majority of the past few years and not thinking about the current political leadership that has been in place for the past 4 months.
141 (b) (5)
142 There needs to be visible demonstrations/presentations of scientific integrity offered more often in the Agency.
143 I am an (b) (6) who has been with the Agency (b) (6) years. The past couple years have been the worst have ever seen in terms of political considerations impeding science and science-based decision making.
144 It was clear to even the most casual observer that the previous administration had an agenda that was driven by politics and not science
145 Some of our leadership (e.g., 2nd line supervisors) were demoted for defending scientific integrity.
146 I do feel that the majority of employees are less than open minded when sharing a different opinion then the opinion that they are advocating.
147 (b) (5)
148 Almost all of my experience is positive, however, at the very end of the Trump Administration, (b) (6), (b) (5)
149 none
150 Things have improved as career leaders have become more modern and this is consistent across political changes in leadership since most science happens within the career ranks. If career leaders are less interested in politics then the work culture values non-political tasks, which most science is a detailed task. Science findings often have ambiguity or probability and two sides can emerge for those who can't embrace ambiguity.
151 We would hear that scientific integrity was important, but observed thinly veiled efforts to undercut settled scientific conclusions (for example, basing conclusions regarding risk from a pollutant on settled EPA science but then casting doubt on that science in order to support a weaker approach).
152 N/A
153 (b) (6) employee - no issues to date.
154 I thought EPA had a strong culture of scientific integrity until the Trump Administration. It turns out, we did not have the systems in place to protect scientific integrity at the Agency during that time. It was very disturbing to me.
155 I am not in a position as a (b) (6) position to know about broader, national policy decisions. I know that within (b) (6) my work is valued by most. There are always some 1st line supervisors or RPMs that do not appreciate when their interpretation of the facts in their reports don't add up to the same conclusion that I come up with. But I base my decisions and opinions on the data. Like an umpire calling balls and strikes.
156 In 2019 and 2020, EPA had a toxic culture of a) discouraging advancing many scientific subjects (including (b) (5)) because they were politically charged and/or would negatively affect industries and b) suppressing communications of scientific information like (b) (5) to the general public.
157 na
158 Imposed deadlines were often very short. This made data analysis activities in support of final conclusions rushed and not as thorough as they should have been.
159 In my view, the program I (b) (6) is terribly understaffed and overworked. That leads to them not having time to adequately consider science or make sure they have enough information to make good decisions. They are in a pattern of churning out mediocre products to keep to a schedule. Due to the constant pressure to keep to the schedule, when a novel or complex issue needs to be considered, that work gets delayed for years.
160 (b) (5)
161 Over the decades, it's common that employees' feelings about an Administration's policy choices influence or inform their views on legality, morality and scientific integrity of the Administration's decisions. Polls like this and other communications on scientific integrity could take some time and discuss each and how they are different, so that discussions on scientific integrity are distinct from feelings about policy choices.
162 Mostly, except for the last 4 years, I have felt that scientific integrity was respected. I am hopeful that things will improve again.
163 During the last administration, it was extremely hard to attend conferences without having a presentation ready. Even getting a presentation/abstract approved was a huge hurdle with lots of red tape. Due to all the bureaucracy, it was extremely hard to get to attend conferences and participate in scientific activity outside of the Agency.
164 No comments
165
This survey makes no sense whatsoever for administrative support professionals. My office does nothing whatsoever with science and I have no basis to answer these questions. You say all responses matter to this survey, yet they are geared to the professional that should have a knowledge base to answer them. If you want ALL employees at EPA, in science AND NOT IN SCIENCE, to answer these questions, then you should revamp this survey to make it relevant to both audiences. This is a waste of time for someone with no knowledge of science at EPA.
166 Its clear that (b) (6) scientists do good work but so often that work is tarnished and manipulated by politicals.
167 Overall in EPA, discussion and support for research results such as (b) (5) that were politically unpopular were discouraged. Also in (b) (6) , it was more important to publish than follow appropriate scientific integrity requirements.
168 Should EJ be included in how we view and approach scientific integrity?
169 Support- the QA, center management and POCs were very helpful in making sure that our research and results were accurate and conclusions were supported by the data. Lack of support- it is more in the way program offices and the (b) (6) held clearances of manuscripts or provided comments that had to be considered even though had no clear relationship with the research or show a lack of understanding. Very confusing times.
170 A couple of examples: (b) (5)
171 Supervisor supports work of writing journal articles/white papers
172 Political interference compromised the integrity of some science assessments originating in other EPA offices.
173
While at the EPA, I have seen a culture in support of Scientific Integrity. I was always allowed to pursue and develop projects when they were requested. Also, during certain periods I have been involved in rigorous statistical analysis and modeling of data to investigate and support agency decisions at many levels. This shifts from one priority from administration to administration, but has always been a requirement. I have worked on any high profile projects within the (b) (6) , and have never been asked to change results or provide a specific conclusion.
174 Over the past two calendar years, the SIO and staff have consistently demonstrated support for a culture of scientific integrity at EPA despite a frayed culture. Lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity has been demonstrated (b) (5)

175 Reports were published with findings altered, censorship of information
176 I have used (b) (6) scientist's and many different scientists across many programs including HQ's to assist me in getting my projects completed. Without their help and on site assistance i could not accomplish my duties and projects and meet EPA's goals.
177 The decision-making process surrounding the development and implementation of the (b) (5) involved a staggering lack of support for a culture scientific integrity.
178 I believe the culture of (b) (5) has been and continues to be the driving force behind decision making in (b) (6) in general. This attitude and the forced timelines for making decisions often allow (b) (5) . This does not mean that unsafe products have resulted from the decisions but that scientific integrity is often given lip service rather than being a foundational approach to decisions.
179 EPA supports scientific integrity.
180 n/a
181 Everyone seems to agree that scientific integrity must be maintained
182 na
183 none
184 (b) (5), (b) (6)
185 (b) (5)
186 When any administration does not want to hear the truth, they won't hear it.
187 During the Trump administration, management seemed to operate in fear of retaliation. They did not want to upset anyone. It was sad. I feel we have turned a corner towards more open and responsible science.
188 NA
189 The Administration seemed more concerned with flow boards and prompt customer service than ensuring work products were vetted with scientific integrity.
190 New supervisors are not trained about scientific integrity and many, because they are inexperienced, believe their job is to not make waves among higher level managers and state/local organizations.
191 we have extensive qa requirements, and honestly professional pride that bolsters our efforts. Non-defensible work just wouldn't even make it out of internal review, in my opinion, nor would it be submitted.
192 I have observed a lack of support in a number of cases where EPA policy or regulatory changes were made with no input from the subject matter experts that did the research and regulatory development for that topic. It's hard to believe the best decisions were made without expert input.
193 Managers support stuff's recommendation.
194 In my view, the agency has been doing a good job to cultivate the scientific integrity.
195 I cannot state more strongly my relief that the government is now under the leadership of an environmentally responsible cadre of political appointees, in contrast to the prior administration's anti-science ethos.
196 I raised early concerns about policy actions that either misrepresented, suppressed, or explicitly excluded consideration of the Agency's established scientific record on (b) (5) . To my dismay, I was told that EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy did not address blatant, egregious violations that enabled the former administration to pursue a purely political agenda that mocked the Agency's history of commitment to evidence-based decision making. Many of those violations are now being addressed through review and revision of Agency actions, including the (b) (5) , under EO 13990. I appreciate what EPA is now doing to correct its Scientific Integrity Policy but do not understand why it took an executive order from the Biden administration to make us confront our own failures and abusive behaviors.
197 Management is disgraceful and polarized in decision making, as well as, just upward career movement of it's employees if one is not one of their elect few.
198 Exposure to (b) (6) protocols and processes is very helpful to form ideas on best practices
199 It seems that managers are more interested in tracking than they are in the scientific rigor or significance of our research - there is a breakdown in communication between the NPDs - particularly for work that is multi-media
200 The biggest indicator of EPA's lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity is the stance that EPA took on returning to the workplace. (b) (5)
201 I've been working here for a year and my division has a great culture of scientific integrity
202 N/A
203 Had to describe since we deal mostly with managers who have no technical background.
204 Data and research findings usually supported by managers, QA officer and lab director
205 A (b) (6) project was stalled when it went to the RA's office. We've lost a year of time to collect data.
206 No comments at this time.
207 For the last 10 years, I felt like I was an administrative person. The administrative duties killed any scientific career I had. When I tried to participate in science, I was criticized for not keeping up with administrative duties. Most new persons in my division did not even recognize that my position title was (b) (6) .
208 When I started working at EPA in (b) (6) the (b) (6) had just been reauthorized with bipartisan support, and sound science was the phrase of the times. Although regulations had to take technical and economic factors into account, maximum contaminant level goals were based on science, and federal advisory committees had a balance of stakeholders. Even under the Bush administration, it seemed like were were adding protection, albeit not as quickly or stringently - but we weren't rolling it back. The past few years have been traumatic as far as loss of scientific integrity and trust that our efforts, on the whole, were not resulting in harm. I think many felt their contribution was getting their dissent on the record during the review process.
209 Despite many new hires, our training budget had been completely cut. So not a single dollar was spent on training, just employee time was used. If an agency cared about scientific integrity, it would use resources to ensure its employees are developing to their full potential.
210 (b) (5), (b) (6)
211 During COVID, there was enormous political pressure to register disinfectants effective against SARS-CoV-2. The culture from the top leadership was to hand hold industry and provide "regulatory flexibilities" rather than to focus on the science and allow adequate time and resources for review of submitted data.
212 (b) (5)
213 In nearly 23 years at EPA, I have seen politics interfere with scientific integrity under all administrations, but the level at which this was attempted under the last administration was well beyond anything else I'd seen.
214 (b) (5), (b) (6)
215 Project involving another federal agency appeared to have some type of friction with certain comments received in the past, but supervisor still supported the comments and concerns I produced despite history involved.
216 n/a
217 Decisions were made based on politics, not science. Science came later, tailored to the politically-favorable outcome.
218 Agency mass-mailers lay out the expectations of staff and programs. That's the only real discussion of the subject in our program.
219 Front line managers have been wonderful in helping defend the integrity of the Agency over the past number of years.
220 Upper management thwarted enforcement of environmental rules, regulations and laws. The logic of clean coal.
221 To my mind, the policy implications drove the decisionmaking at EPA over the last 4 years in a way that departed from previous administrations. The last administration didn't worry about the implications for agency legal and scientific integrity by changing 180 degrees from long-standing practice, making arguments without merit, and reinterpreting science to fit the end goal. They didn't care about the impact on the mission or the impact on the morale of the career staff nor did they respect that the career staff could contribute valuable input. Rather than provide legal advice on the vulnerabilities of making certain decisions, the General Counsel often would determine whether he concurred on a particular action based on whether the Administrator wanted to proceed or not.
222 The recent regional Scientific Integrity seminar was very informative, and my direct supervisor has demonstrated support for scientific integrity within my section.
223 (b) (5), (b) (6)
224 I have a strong support for scientific integrity and believe it helps the agency grow and be held accountable.
225 The teams I have worked with over the years always supported scientific integrity.

226 The quality program supports a culture of scientific integrity, ensuring any environmental decision is supported by the quality of the data.
227 Lack of support of a culture of scientific integrity: Have you seen (b) (6) leaders' response to the (b) (6) report? Many responses are completely dismissive of the (b) (6) findings, and leaders have stated to staff repeatedly they have no intention of trying to understand the basis for the findings.
228 (b) (5), (b) (6)
229 (b) (6) management state that they support an environment of scientific integrity, but it doesn't seem that what they say is put into action. Again, in my experiences from working with the (b) (6), when they do something "suspicious" and I bring that to the attention of my management, nothing ever seems to happen. I am always told that is nothing for me to worry about. It seems to me that there are many pieces under this umbrella term "scientific integrity" and if we are questioning something, then it should be taken seriously.
230 When I was hired at EPA, my temporary supervisor hated me me for the fact that I was not an environmentalist. As my years at the agency have extended, I have noticed that colleagues have an out right hatred for people who work in certain industries. I have found that the majority of workers in the agency have no practical experience and have made decisions based on the public opinion and not sound scientific fact.
231 I think EPA should strive for simple and efficient ways to demonstrate and support integrity that take timely publication and product completion into account. Real integrity shouldn't be substituted with redundancy of approval steps or detailed documentation of procedures in different ways in multiple places, along with a tendency to eagerly put the latest software into practice without sufficient evaluation of its fit for purpose. To give a specific example, I don't believe application of state of the art systematic review practices using commercially available software have improved the integrity of our assessments as intended. But it did greatly disrupt the usual process of reviewing and synthesizing the scientific literature by diverting efforts to excessive screening of numerous papers that would normally not have been considered. I think this is because their scope is broader than the narrow research topics the software was designed for, and the commercial software was neither up to the task nor adequately internally evaluated for our purpose before it was applied to an actual EPA product. As the question implies, a real culture of scientific integrity is worth far more than detailed procedures put in place to demonstrate it, and excessively time consuming procedures designed to appear more rigorous won't increase real integrity if it isn't in our culture.
232 We've come through a very disturbing time. Hopefully what we experienced will never happen again.
233 A clear example of lack of support is removing the words "Global Warming" or "Climate change" from our EPA vocabulary. This was done because of one person's power, not their education. And most definitely, not on scientific data or information.
234 too numerous to count. (b) (5)
235 I feel like there has been a bit of a tug of war on the causes and solutions to climate change. Some of it seems related to the cost of taking actions to reduce man made contributions to climate change, but also it seems some people believe one way or the other. This inconsistency can send a signal that the science is not driving the policy.
236 (b) (5)
237 (b) (5)
238 There has been a shift over the past few years where risk managers are more willing to undermine the work and professional judgement of scientists in the decision-making process. While it is always beneficial to have conversations with the team and come to an understanding amongst the team as to what makes sense for the decision given the science and additional information, undermining the models developed and used by the science divisions, as well as the best professional judgement of scientists carte blanche is a dangerous precedent. I have seen this happen in decision documents where risk managers "characterize away" risk without sufficient justification (b) (5) This is very different from the risk management culture I experienced in the same division/office just a decade ago, and over time has a risk of not protecting the public and achieving the mission of the Agency.
239 The agency fails to support scientific integrity when it fails to ensure accountability for career managers who condoned and supported breaches of the Scientific Integrity Policy in the last administration. Career staff and managers were promoted in the previous administration due to their willingness to ignore inconvenient facts and promote policies that ran counter to the agency's mission. They have retained their positions under the current administration. Managers and staff who maintained their integrity under the previous administration were frequently passed over, in part because they were considered "boat rockers". To this day, those employees passed over for promotion due to their integrity continue to work under and be managed by those who did not.
240 The scientists used to brief the upper level managers/political appointees. However, the last administration (2019-2020) did not meet with the scientist (b) (5), (b) (6)
241 Support has generally been strong and consistent for encouraging scientific integrity in our own organization, which stems from a strong belief and position on the issue taken by our senior career management. Absent that support, it would be more likely that the preferences of the political process would adversely impact the quality and support for good scientific research in the office.
242 (b) (5) We are on the right track now, but this was a concern during the last administration.
243 Lack of support due to political atmosphere and lack understanding of the need of scientific integrity.
244 The last administration did not want EPA doing anything at all, as evidenced by the proposed budgets. Many regulations were reversed; it will take years to gain back the ground we lost.
245 Watching our government embrace lies and misinformation: scientific, religious, health...they created of culture of ignorance that spread like cancer throughout the entire country. The experience was absolutely frightening and mentally debilitating with daily news nightmares. Half the country believed the lies, acted out on those lies, and worst of all, still believe they are right. It was like the rise of the saw dust brains. The culture that was created was a culture of selfishness, ignorance, and unwillingness to do their small part for the good of the country/globe. We must do more to create a nationwide culture of honesty, reasoning with facts, sensitivity to real problems, and encourage rational conclusions.
246 I will re-state my experiences over the past several years: (1) early experience - few SI issues at EPA or in my office (2) 2017-2018 - major SI problems at EPA and in my office (3) 2019-2020 - major SI problems at EPA and some improvement in my office (4) 2021 (to date): significant improvement at EPA and in my office
247 (b) (5), (b) (6)
248 The new requirements for regulatory managers and regulatory team leaders to be in science series is limiting for regulatory employees without science backgrounds. This may also limit support for scientific integrity due to lack of distinct separation between science and policy decision making.
249 (b) (5) This did not improve our international relations.
250 The survey should have had "does not apply" or "not applicable" as a selection to the answers.
251 Support - we released a guidance document that raised concerns from industry (too far) and environmental/public health groups (not far enough). We were not pressured to nudge it either way.
252 Rule making and many issues were watered down
253 A deputy science integrity official being an nonscientist is real hindrance to the program. (b) (5), (b) (6)
254 In my experience, there has been support for and lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity and it depends more on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the SES corps than any other factor.
255 Most of employees and managers at the EPA do not have a strong science background and does not understand data quality correctly. Therefore, the conversation on scientific integrity was never sufficiently understood correctly and permeated through all levels of the organization.
256 EPA and other science-based federal agencies need to be scientifically driven during all administrations with absolute transparency in all decisions made. There should be no opportunities for political leaders to influence or affect the important work we do for the citizens of the U.S.
257 As mentioned previously, EPA staff need training and resource to be more effective in survey taking.
258 In my recent experience, I see a renewed energy for support for a culture of scientific integrity on a larger scale.
259 (b) (5), (b) (6)
260 In my experience (b) (6) technicians and Acquisition and QA specialists have been invaluable to providing me support.
261 For some collaborative work products, there has been a lack of transparency regarding revisions (both with regard to rationales and responsibility/chain of command). I'm not aware that this was motivated by anything untoward, but it still points to opportunities for improvement and formalization of processes for document control and guidance.

262
I have no experiences that demonstrate support for scientific integrity at the Agency. Lack of support has been an underlying feeling but I have no experiential proof of that since I am not in (b) (6) . What I can say since I have been here is that I and my observation of colleagues are dissatisfaction with the (b) (6) . The organization appears to me to have been poorly managed since I arrived to the agency in 2016. Work is being held up or not getting accomplished and many scientists in the organization have left due to stress, pressure, disrespect and poor management. The inappropriate mannerisms of some of (b) (6) management to employees, Mangers and Directors being mean, snarky and disrespectful. (b) (5) Its all gotten way out of hand.

263 Science was demoralized and suppressed by the political appointees and the leaderships.

264 In the work I do at EPA I have not had any lack of support for culture of scientific integrity. Management has always supported me in decisions based on science.

265 Significant efforts were made to retain staff who brought technical expertise that increased the quality of science and technical decision-making in the program.

266 I have only had positive interactions and support for scientific integrity in (b) (6)

267 In my experience, political appointees and/or senior career management have allowed consequential decisions -- (b) (5) -- to go unmade because of political pressures.

268 the past four years were unprecedented, and i don't think that will be an issue going forward but i do hope career leaders will put policies and changes in place that can not be changed on a whim. thank you.

269
(b) (6) denied travel to a national workshop to present research/technical work already accepted into the program with no reason given, specific program funds were available, first line manager supported travel, withdrawing from the workshop was an embarrassment to EPA, one of the executive sponsors of the event. Limited opportunities and funding for technical development and training. (b) (6) hinders collaborative opportunities and fails to foster research and innovation. Recent (b) hires often do not have strong academic credentials and in some cases lack a scientific course of study, focus appears to be a body count (increasing numbers) instead of a careful selection process for the right person/right job.

270 The tiered approach to Quality Assurance conducted within the (b) (6) works against supporting a widespread culture of scientific integrity, in my opinion. It does so by elevating certain scientific topics of high policy interest to such a degree that it can hinder the public dissemination of scientific information, while at the same time allowing topics of lesser policy interest not to meet what should be a minimum level of quality applied to all science, regardless of policy or public interest. There must be a middle ground where assuring the quality of scientific data--a critical step in promoting a culture of scientific integrity--is applied in a fit-for-purpose manner, but homogenously with respect to the level of scrutiny and minimum acceptance criteria, across all scientific endeavors undertaken at the Agency.

271 The #1 environmental killer is radon gas. The EPA spends ~$8M/yr on the radon program, mostly in grants to the states (8 E-6/50 = $160,000/state). Do we have "scientific integrity" when we essentially ignore the environmental hazard that kills the most people?

272 The culture of scientific integrity is returning with new leadership.

273
My career at EPA started in (b) (6) . During the (b) (6) I have worked at EPA, my experiences demonstrate strong support for a culture of scientific integrity, particularly at the staff, and office (i.e., (b) (6)) supervisory levels (BC, DD, OD). I have had the opportunity to work on controversial topics and issues (b) (6)) and in all cases both staff and management have demonstrated commitment to scientific integrity ensuring technical rigor, defensibility and transparency in work products.

274 EPA stood behind me when I submitted a critical technical review of a scientific product which was interpreted by the author in a negative way, as a personal attack. (b) (6) should continue to encourage a culture that honors the time and standards that critical peer review represents.

275 In 2019 and 2020, policy was driving decision-making and obstructing science document clearance extensively, in the (b) (6)

276 In the past I've been aware of papers submitted for internal review that 'sat on the desk' of managers for overly long times, though I myself have not had that difficulty. I have been asked (and agreed) to change some wording in papers that I've published, but in ways that did not totally distort the conclusions.

277 We are too rushed due to court ordered deadlines. Many are simply not possible given the complexity of the issues. So all issues are not always fully developed.

278 some time I feel I have to agree with the group to be accepted

279 No support for EPA authors on the last (b) (6) at any level of the Administration. All I can say about that is ... Wow

280 (b) (5)

281 In the last two years, I cannot think of any decisions in my Division that reflected any issues or concerns about scientific integrity.

282 I appreciate (b) (6) hanging in there during the last administration and doing her best to preserve scientific integrity at EPA. Thank you!

283 I am aware of two specific instances under the previous administration where the science was asked if it could support a pre-determined conclusion. It was not stated that black and white, but that is what happened.

284 i have very little understanding of why we provide the types and amounts of (b) (5) . It's not transparent or rooted in data or science, as far as I know.

285 I will not comment for fear of reprisal.

286 It was demoted on purpose.

287 Overall, the grunt scientists always do their jobs and get the job done in terms of the science and follow. The policy dictates things sometimes, and it's a risk benefit analysis and sometimes money and politics talks, but the scientists have always done their job staying honest, but people don't understand that.

288 (b) (5)

289 (b) (5)

290 Support for or lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at the Agency, unfortunately has felt dependent on the political leadership at the time.

291 I have had concerns about the "transparency" rules put in place by the last administration, and appointments to certain scientific advisory groups such as the CASAC, but the new leadership is already addressing these issues.

292 (b) (6) and her team have been very open, honest, accommodating, and encouraging of SI in ORD. I very much appreciate their (her) perspective and approach to help our staff understand why SI is so vital, and for setting up systems to make it safe and painless to report potential SI violations.

293
More training on how to identify and address issues that may be more about differing of scientific opinions or science-policy but not necessary a scientific integrity issues would be helpful.

294 Scrutiny on enforcement actions and projects that are over a certain amount of funding.

295 The political management in 2019-2020 questioned the number of scientific staff going to profesional meetings which is important for professional development.

296 My first line supervisors have all been scientists of various disciplines, and all strongly supported scientific integrity at least in theory. However, there were frequently cases where there were pressures to get projects/work done, where I was asked to do a bit less of a thorough job in order to meet some arbitrary deadline, and provided no guidance in terms of how or where to limit my activities in order to achieve this outcome.

297 I was hoping to see changes with the new administration. It is too early but based on my observations of the past few months, I don't see much improvement for the future

298 I have only been with EPA (b) (6) During that short time, the agency commitment to scientific integrity has been strong.

299 As a (b) (6) my supervisor does not support or value my research or publications and refuses to use them to evaluate my performance. Senior managers avoid any serious discussion or disagreement. I am seeking other employment options because (b) (6) does not support its scientists.

300 None

301 The emphasis, in recent years, the policy has been directed to minimizing impacts on business, rather than protecting public health and the environment. Likewise, civil enforcement case investigations have been less thorough, and the focus has been on a prompt resolution of a narrower range of issues.

302
EPA has looked the other way for many years when it comes to (b) (5) There has been no funding allocated to study the issue, only to report on what is in the open literature.

303
Communication about analyses and upcoming publications that are built on EPA collected/curated data sets. The communication with the groups that collected/curate the data are important to be sure that everyone has a chance for feedback and to share their experience with the data, but the process is very time consuming and sets back publication of results by several months.

304 In our regional office, SI has not been the emphasis that our management regularly communicated and promoted.

305 NA

306
I believe the staff and regional management are generally strongly committed to a culture of scientific integrity but that administrations politically can and occasionally do contribute to a lack of support

307 I have no negative inputs. The agency openly supports scientific integrity.

308 (b) (5) e have a long way to go to overcome the trust issues resulting from the lack of EPA leadership over the last four years.

309 The priority in my team is on (b) (6) - all other work is a lower priority level. Given the high level of workload for (b) (6) its very difficult to get any work done in regards to supporting tribes and scientific research. I did receive support through much effort through partial volunteer staff time to assist in a project but nothing else has been provided even from those who should be assigned to assist because of their heavy workloads. There is a need generally for FTE in (b) (6) if adequately provided there would be more support for scientific integrity because we'd have more time, resources, and support to actually do the work and fulfill partner requests more effectively.

310 I have middle managers who, when reviewing draft documents, will take out relevant scientific information that does not support their policy preference. They do not explain why they do this. It isn't clear to me if they think that information is irrelevant, is overly confusing for senior managers, is less important than other information, or is to be ignored because it disagrees with their policy preference. The first three reasons could be consistent with scientific integrity, but not the last.

311 supervisors support discussion and free expression of ideas and scientific data

312 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]

313 I've attended meetings on scientific integrity at EPA and have never personally encountered any lack of support in regards to scientific integrity.

314 I think the last two years of Trump Administration negatively impacted EPA's abilities to meet the principles outlined in the Scientific Integrity Policy. Career staff and managers tried but had to acquiesce to the political wind of these years.

315 none that I can think of

316 There was a lot of political pressure at the top to discredit the work of EPA. There was a dramatic shift in policy with the change in administration (b) (5) [redacted]

317 It's difficult to focus on scientific integrity when you're busy trying to go against science with deregulatory efforts.

318 n/a

319 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]

320 My own challenge in terms of assessing 'support' or 'lack of support' for scientific integrity is my own limited understanding of what 'scientific integrity' is. I generally define it as following the science. A key complexity, for me, is that the evidence and models of science seem to often fall just short of answering the policy question of the day. And, in this case, we tend to defer to scientists. As in, 'if the science was done on this question, what do you think it would say?'. Sometimes there is support for this deference to scientists, sometimes there is a lack of support - or skepticism toward scientists' opinions.

321 n/a

322 (b) (5) [redacted]

323 In (b) (6) there was support from my supervisors for a culture of scientific integrity.

324 no comments

325 There were cases where there was not support to continue work products that were begun under a previous administration. That lead to wasted time and money. There were also cases where work products were stalled due to incomplete reviews.

326 (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted]

327 Knowledgeable and experienced staff were largely kept out of the process of analyzing and reviewing the (b) (5) , which led to a rule that was not supported by the research to a level acceptable to experienced scientists. This was not a decision made at the (b) (6) level, but at a much higher management level. It acted to reduce the moral, at the least, of all scientists involved and aware of the issue throughout the office.

328 I didn't trust officials brought in by the Trump administration.

329 Reluctance from regional leadership to having metrics in the "red" sometimes led to pressure to speed work up or cut corners in order to meet unrealistic timelines. The focus wasn't on the most scientifically-defensible position or product, but instead on getting something done so a bowling chart or ELMS review showed "progress."

330 (b) (6) has an HR policy that 1st line supervisors cannot supervisor scientists/engineers unless they too are scientists and engineers. This sounds good, but in practice, (b) HR has reclassified the scientists and engineers as Environmental Protection Specialists (EPS) in order to make it appear that they are not technical employees because they now work for a non-technical (EPS) supervisor. This is an abhorrent practice in both (b) (5) . Scientists and engineers are hidden underneath EPS titles that they did not want in order to protect a non-technical EPS supervisor. Worse, due to the misuse of this policy, when a non-technical supervisor needs to hire a new employee, they can only hire non-technical employees (EPS) - even if the work is actually scientific/engineering. Thus retiring scientists and engineers who work for an EPS supervisor are being replaced with true non-technical EPS new hires. (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted] - only because the supervisor is an unqualified EPS and is improperly supervising technical employees who have been reclassified as EPS. The type of work (scientific/engineering) should dictate hiring needs, not the unqualified supervisor's title. Why would a scientific agency ever post an EPS position that requires NO degree? This is a clear demonstration of (b) (6) [redacted] complete lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at (b) (6) EPA.

331 This survey is difficult to answer because many of the questions assume one is a scientist or involved in the development and assessment of science. There should be more n/a options. Also, it can be difficult to generalize across the whole agency. Some components experienced more interference than others and some tried to fight for these principles - so you get a compromise, middling answer.

332 (b) (5) [redacted]

333 (b) (5) [redacted]

334 I can cite the policy reversals under the previous two Administrators, the "toning down" of conclusions in scientific reports / journal articles, and the roadblocks put in place by (b) (6) that hamper my research as "lack of support" for a culture of scientific integrity.

335 See previous responses

336 I think there was a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity at the Agency under the old administration (2019-2020), because it appeared that the regulations were based on publicly available data instead of scientific data.

337 There was some scientific integrity training that was provided that I would consider supportive of the culture, but appeared to be more of a check box for someone. Rather than a more holistic engagement with staff in furthering and deepening culture of scientific integrity across the Agency.

338 Overall, I'm satisfied with the culture of scientific integrity. Since we're doing regulatory science, I don't expect the decision making to be 100% aligned with the science, as long as there's a good explanation for the factors that influenced the ultimate decision.

339 The way management responded to building health and safety concerns are an example of the state of scientific integrity in our region. (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]

340 I was a (b) (6) for several years. In 2017 the administrator decided to re-recruit all the BOSC subcommittees for political reasons, and we ended up replacing some highly qualified members who had done excellent service. In the process, (b) (6), (b) (5) [redacted] That seems like a lack of scientific integrity.

341 For 3 decades I have consistently been impressed with the culture of integrity, rigor, and professionalism among (b) (6) staff and management. These values have generally persisted regardless of the political administration, though the previous one posed the greatest challenge (it had more of an impact on morale than on behavior).

342 I have always received the support I needed from our Region. We discuss other possibilities and our leaders are open for discussion. I consider our Region to have excellent leaders.

343 Political leadership has reached too far down into decision-making. This has created paranoia among regional leadership who no longer want to make decisions without running it by headquarters. This means decisions take longer to make, the science gets marginalized, and we don't get as much work done. This is now occurring in administration after administration.

344 In general I feel that scientific integrity at EPA is very good. There was, however, a study done at HQ where they gave us on the work group 2 weeks to review, which was not nearly enough time (unless you drop all your other work and meetings). (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]

345 EPA has a strong tradition of scientific integrity, and career leadership has strongly supported transparency, scientific inquiry, and publication of conclusions free of policy implications. The previous administration disbanded ongoing processes, delayed the start of regular projects, and simply never started new projects. (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
346 (b) (5) [redacted].
347 We are working on (b) (6) [redacted] that is very scientifically rigorous and exciting.
348 The lack of scientific integrity was from the leadership of the agency, not the career scientists. When it was clear that science and public health decisions were being influenced by a political position (anti-regulation), then there was no room for scientific integrity at the staff level. I have full faith in the scientists at the agency; it is the leadership that needs to be held at account for the failures to support apolitical scientific and public health work.
349 Since these questions were all about the past Administration, I think I answers these questions correctly. For this Administration, or in 2021, I would hopefully answer these questions more positively.
350 (b) (5) [redacted] by EPA appointees during the previous administration demonstrate a clear lack of scientific integrity at the political leadership level
351 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
352 Superfund management should be required to have a discussion with their RPM when determining the upcoming targets (beans). Don't present RPMs with a fait accompli (e.g., telling an RPM that for the XYZ site, we're going to start/finish a specific task next fiscal year). Consult with the RPM. Don't present him or her with a target that might be inappropriate.
353 (b) (5) [redacted]. We take pride in doing our best work to protect human health, and that has been significantly eroded. I have been through several changes in administration, with sometimes significant changes in policy direction, but never have felt so attacked as a scientist. It is a real pleasure to see things returning to 'normal', but I still feel burned by the realization that this can happen again, depending on politics.
354 I have always felt supported
355 Yesterday (5/25/2021) OIG (and the associated news outlets) announced how poorly EPA handled incoming data with respect to dicamba registrations--no surprise here! Courts have repeatedly assailed EPA for ignoring the assembled data about chlorpyrifos--a scandal that goes back to a meeting with former Administrator Pruitt and the CEO of Dow Chemical. (b) (5) [redacted] And in (b) (6) [redacted] nobody could tell me who was pushing back against them, even they didn't prevail. Morale at EPA hasn't been lower since the Anne Burford Gorsuch/Rita Lavelle days in the early 1980s! And Wheeler's efforts to emasculate the new TSCA (via OPPT non-career appointees) were far more insidious because Wheeler knew how to work the mechanisms to accomplish the political agenda. It will take at least a decade to fully undo the damage.
356 My only criticism is that the way ELMS has been applied to actual research products is at odds with ensuring integrity and rigor of the science, as it puts too much emphasis on deadlines that in many cases are arbitrary and difficult to predict in advance for complex research projects. The time that scientists are expected to spend on ELMS exercises (e.g. huddles, updating flow boards and proxy cards) reduces the amount of time available to do the actual research, which also negatively impacts the rigor and integrity of the work.
357 My branch chief is always willing to listen and hear out ideas even if they don't agree with them.
358 Career senior managers seemed to lack courage to address even egregious behavior by political appointees.
359 when we talk about scientific integrity "climate change" comes to mind. Climate change was handled differently during the new administration from 2016-2020 and that was not a good thing for scientific integrity.
360 I think this whole survey is missing the point. Certain areas of the agency's work as it it tied to its mission have become politized. I personally did not experience a lot of interference or pressure to conduct rushed or poor science. I did not feel pressure to change the outcomes of scientific results. These statements pertain to work areas/program areas we were told/authorized to work on. However there were large areas of work that we could not work on. So there was not interference/pressure in those work areas because there was not active work. The work was just shut down and there was no need for any level of management or staff to feel pressure. I think you should have included questions about whether you had work/program areas that were active and then shut down and work stopped or funding was eliminated. In other words, I am not sure there was a ton of bad science within the agency. I think there was just zero science being done in certain areas of work that the Agency historically worked on or perhaps should work on since it fits within the Agency's mission.
361 (b) (5) [redacted]
362 (b) (5) [redacted]
363 Support for integrity is evident in non-climate related science.
364 N/A
365 The (b) (6) [redacted] management team is now and always has been committed to scientific integrity. It is something brought up in meetings, and our commitment to Scientific Integrity is signed by management and hung on the walls.
366 Sudden changes at the last-minute of analytical conclusions and policy by high-ranking Agency political appointees with no change by staff to respond.
367 Overall, I think (b) (6) has good scientific integrity. There were a handful of decisions in the past administration that seemed rushed, uncoordinated, and potentially politically motivated. The rushed schedule made it difficult to give things full rigorous review. In my personal experience, I'm thinking mostly about (b) (5) [redacted]. I'm not sure the decision would have changed, but we could have had a better product. The current administration seems to be doing a better job so far of trying to coordinate decisions (such as trying to incorporate (b) (6) [redacted] review work).
368 (b) (5) [redacted]
369 I was told by my second line manager that "we don't do science" when I wanted to participate in a scientific workgroup.
370 all levels of management need to be supported - meaning if upper management is constrained by political opinions/pressures, there is not support down the line for SI.
371 Data is reviewed to ensure integrity. could go either way for supporting good work or filtering that work.
372 I have general concern about the extent to which politics can drive priorities & what we can/can't say as an EPA scientist. This varies among administrations
373 Lack of support: (b) (5) [redacted]
374 If one does not believe that climate change is man made and will cause harm, you are looked upon with condescension.
375 N/A
376 Lack of support from those around you to advance unless the interaction was agreeable to your superiors.
377 (b) (5) [redacted]
378 Career advancement appears to be more important than scientific integrity
379 My experience as a newer career employee gave me the impression that the culture of scientific integrity was not highlighted as a priority or pillar of the work we do at the division level or office level.
380 Too many "quotas" assigned to work task, no opportunity provided to go back and check results after decisions were made. The focus was on "how many" got done not the quality of the job.
381 For the most part, conclusions are based on the science. However, under the last administration it seems that this wasn't always the case
382 I came from academia and direct research (b) (6) years ago. I have experienced a commitment to scientific integrity until the drastic shift in early 2017, when a significant shift away from allowing scientists to do defensible work, to a culture of ignoring the data and conclusions and misrepresenting those same conclusions for political reasons. I have seen it happen and have non-concurred on several decisions as a result - to no avail.
383 https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2021-05/documents/_epaoig20210524-21-e-0146.pdf There are many instances where EPA changes the findings in violation of the scientific integrity, and there are NEVER any consequences (who got demoted, fired or any kind of tangible punishment?). There is plenty of talk about "scientific integrity" and it is totally supported in theory, but in practice there is no benefit to calling out your supervisor or any upper management for scientific integrity violations. The whole thing is a farce and a waste of time for the scientists.
384 (b) (5) [redacted]
385 As noted earlier, ineffective clearance procedures in the Region. Lack of training for new scientists at EPA on how to approach doing and reporting on research with all appropriate supervisory approval and clearance.

386 I believe that the rules established under the Trump administration regarding conflict of interest with grant recipients being on scientific advisory panels was a very positive thing, and I believe that the Biden administration damages credibility and transparency by eliminating these rules.
387 Trainings are provided on culture of scientific integrity
388
scientific integrity was far more valued before the 1993 GPRA- over 25 years since the GPRA and it is very much degraded in favor of bean/commitment monitoring- from regional staff level management through to senior HQ management - all seek bean commitments with little to no accountability of integrity- and yet they even acknowledge that over 20 years ago no one thought achieving the 2020 goals was possible and now are praising themselves for meeting or nearly meeting the 2020 goals- yet are not looking at the reality of how they got there - and all the IG is interested in is why are we lagging and not producing in areas/projects- the IG should be looking at why/how EPA accomplished the impossible and the problems it left behind
389 Not applicable
390 We fail to remedy material weaknesses identified by the GAO, OMG, IG, and by internal subject matter experts. (b) (5) [redacted]
391
Conducting a water quality standards review involves reviewing the scientific justification for a change to standards. Senior managers had no interest in the results of that review. They only wanted approvals. They only wanted to make state leaders happy. Because of this, states submitted unusual, unsupported revisions during this time period because they expected approvals for unscientific revisions. Senior managers bent over backwards coming up with bizarre, precedent setting reasons to support approvals. In the end, the decision was made to not act. I would like to give examples of what happened, but these managers are still in place and I do not feel confident that discussing it would not have ramifications.
392 (b) (6) [redacted] program during the 2019-2020 timeframe suppressed scientific integrity and scientific findings in lieu of political pressures and interest. Multiple times staff findings were altered or suppressed on large, contentious projects in the region because of political pressure. Staff were told to participate in efforts to deregulate the (b) (6) [redacted] program despite lack of scientific support for the decisions.
393 Pressure from political appointees to not take an action for political reasons rather than taking the action based on science that might be politically unpopular
394
Support for: The policy has been distributed, posted, and discussed. It was communicated to be important. Lack of support for: Most of the ELMS projects focus on streamlining and doing things faster. If something comes up outside the box that needs to explored further from a scientific standpoint, that idea would be unlikely to gain traction, since it would derail meeting the targets.
395 N/A
396 Honestly, it was not apparent to me whether a decision made in (b) (6) [redacted] were made at EPA or OMB during interagency review. In fact, it was very clear that the message was transmitted in an unorthodox way so that it was not clear (transmitted by someone outside my management chain).
397 Management officials (including career) are able to force edits to documents with limited tracking and transparency. They are able to exclude individuals from further work on a subject. While there may be legitimate policy reasons to override a scientific determination, there are no mechanisms to track this. As a counterpoint, my colleagues at FDA have explained that while managers still have the power to override a bench scientist, it requires a formal log and explanation, rather than mere editing of a document.
398 N/A
399 My managers and Division Director have been supportive of scientific integrity. It enhances the validity of the data that we collect and analyze and the conclusions and policy decisions that are subsequently rendered from the work.
400 project, funding and products that were not favorable to the current policies of the administration were cut
401 In my time at EPA, my region has always been supportive of scientific integrity. Leadership understand the importance of it. We do as much as possible with the resources we have to ensure scientific integrity is a priority.
402 Rulemakings were not based on EPA science. I was able to proceed with my research and did not face interference with it.
403
I've already spoken to this in previous answers. (b) (6) [redacted] Talk about the fox watching the hen house, "get those samples tested and don't complain" is the theme where I work. (b) (6) [redacted] therefore, anyone not understanding this fact I consider to be ignorant. We need a culture of support and understanding. We need a culture of seasoned scientists to mentor the newer scientists, but currently, management going all the way back to DC, doesn't care about those older personnel. They don't act on the advice provided them by outgoing retirees. I will continue to give my very best to the American people until I'm done working in spite of miss-management.
404
In the past several years, deadlines have been the driving factor for work rather than focusing on the science behind the decisions. There was extreme pressure to respond to public and peer review comments by redoing parts of the work in a short timeframe rather than scoping out and conducting additional analyses thoughtfully. Staff did not feel supported and felt that they had no room to push back on decisions that they did not agree with. Staff were told what to do and when to have it completed and that created a culture of distrust.
405 Too new to comment.
406 One tiny example speaks volumes: the (b) (5) [redacted]. If you think it's a coincidence, you haven't been paying attention. While this is a cocktail-party type of example, pressure to make subtle changes, avoid making your program look bad to political appointees, hold back on results till more favorable political climate etc. have all been common. It's hard to say at staff level how much this was directly the result of openly dishonest instructions from political appointees, and how much was the self-inflicted restraint of career management to avoid rocking the boat and risk damaging the programs in their portfolio. A frustrated communication specialist told me her instructions from a political appointee in one instance were "I'm not gonna tell you not to do it; and I'm not gonna tell you to go ahead", accompanied by eloquent looks. Of course, verbal instructions like these leave no record. So do you report something like this? What evidence can you produce, and there's plenty of plausible deniability anyway. But they do have an impact on what gets done and how we accomplish our mission.
407
have always seen support for scientific integrity. When I (b) (6) [redacted], every aspect of this process, that I was responsible for had to be documented and signed off on, by me.
408 scientific integrity needs to be maintained in staff level discussions with rigorous scientific debate. this demonstrates integrity, helps scientists refine their scientific rationale and trains new staff. senior staff and senior leaders need to encourage this debate and integrity by demonstrating it. my experience instead was that debate was often dismissed and staff were put down for not knowing the answers in the interest of time / efficiency.
409 Prior administration seemed more concerned with rolling back Obama-era changes and reducing the consequences to industry for polluting.
410 PFAS
411 EPA political appointees overturned some past decisions that were grounded in sound science, as required by statute, stating it was a policy decision. However, they were not able to provide a sound argument for why the underlying scientific conclusions should not be upheld despite policy discretion to do so.
412
- (b) (5) [redacted]
413 I really have no basis for responding to these questions. Sorry!
414 (b) (6) [redacted] constantly faces pressure from other divisions to change policies to be less protective of human health and the environment. Over the last several years, management has adopted an attitude of appeasement, changing our policies in response to complaints outside the division over the objections of some staff in the division.
415 Integrity is our stock in trade. Without that, we lack credibility etc. We support science.
416 It appears that bean counting to make quotas and holding funding for selective projects is more important than the scientific integrity of the agency
417 Conducting data analysis to support decision making based on application of EPA policy and guidance.
418
Mid level management won t support work on issues that they perceive will be unpopular with political management instead of focusing on the biggest risks and biggest potential benefits.
419 i have spent decades working for EPA. Most of the time my experience has been positive. most of my career has been spent on emerging technologies. Level playing field considerations were a shock to me. While i understand the policy imperative that led to this situation, it would be good for the Agency if some greater understanding of the warping of scientific integrity leads to greater flexibility in level playing field interpretation/implementation.
420 Fear is a stong reason that people stop speaking up and speaking out. The Fear Factor has gone way up in recent years.
421 (b) (5) [redacted]
422 I observed a bias amongst the career staff against the political leadership of the last Administration, including on scientific and technical issues
423 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
424 I've noticed a hesitancy to release scientific results that may be seen as politically controversial.
425 I think scientific integrity depends on the competency in doing the job. When the gap between expectation and competency is wide, erosion of integrity becomes a concern. There fore setting the right expectation and building competency become the key to improve adherence to principles.
426 Strong data transparency; strong QC

427 During the 2017-2018 period, I witnessed the [redacted]. That demonstrated a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity. Luckily, no such activities occurred after new political level appointees arrived in [redacted] 2019. The [redacted] leadership from 2019-2020 respected the career staff as well as scientific integrity, and did not interfere with any of the technical analyses I was involved in. The current political leadership in EPA and [redacted] also demonstrate strong support for a culture of scientific integrity.

428 In [redacted] we continued to include a [redacted] even though we knew that there could be backlash if HQ caught on.

429 EPA staff and local (career-level) management and HQ first line management have generally been extremely supportive of scientific integrity. Scientific integrity in data collection and analysis, and in using scientific findings for making policy decisions, is the foundation of fulfilling EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

430 [redacted] managers do not have a good understanding of the agency processes that are available. need training in the scientific integrity policy and other supporting guidance documents about how to manage the process of creating scientific documents.

431 Lack of support: not promoting people in line with their expertise, thereby undermining our scientific expertise and integrity. Not allowing for technical GS14s in the Regions makes it so the only way to become a GS14 is to become a manager. That puts more value on our ability to manage people, and less value on our scientific expertise. If we want people with the expertise to make difficult scientific integrity evaluations, we need to value those people by providing technical GS13s and GS14s at the Regional level.

432 Many efforts coming out of [redacted] were viewed negatively by a select group of people. Things were delayed in sometimes an endless cycle of meetings and unnecessary reviews.

433 I mentioned I was kept from stating any opinions as regarded proposed projects or policies [redacted]. This created a very uncomfortable, incongruent conversation where politics was constantly interfering in the agency-to-agency relationship to co-regulate. There was a definite lack of support. And I knew a past [redacted] had been removed from that position by the same [redacted] when he had tried to express his scientific opinion. In fact, he was eventually pushed out of EPA and when he applied for a [redacted] position again, he was declined an interview. The same situation occurred then and has not improved since the mid 2000's.

434 I have not experienced any lack of support for scientific integrity, which demonstrates indirectly that there is support for it. In collaborative instances with other parts of EPA, there sometimes seems to be a tendency to be more driven by politics than science, which shows a lack of support. I believe EPA should be unbiased and simply report science, whether it adheres to what one wants it to or not. I have experienced some things through collaborative efforts that seem to suggest a lack of support.

435 Decision making seemsin some cases not to correspond with experience or scientific discussions

436 Policy and risk management decisions were clearly and overtly prioritized over science. It will happen again but we need to be more prepared and the science integrity dispute resolution mechanism does nothing but provide one more avenue to point out a problem that our career senior leaders were handling as well as they could anyway.

437 I have raised multiple issues concerning scientific integrity and received no support.

438 When there are heated debates I know that the argument is often over nuanced scientific interpretations. When I don't hear much esp on a major chemical assessment I think otherwise. Our tech team science meetings is a venue to get feedback on an important topic and it has worked well over the years.

439 [redacted]

440 I was part of a team that produced a scientific report to support regulatory-decision making. Career management went to the mat with political leadership, [redacted] Stakeholders opposed to the decision are unaware of the existence of this FOIA-releasable, final agency document. The [redacted] should be fired.

441 During the last administration, [redacted] management strongly supported scientists, but yet the political leadership of program offices was able to slow down or prevent scientific information from being shared with the public. These efforts also harmed trust between [redacted] program offices and regions which still needs to be repaired.

442 I am new hire, without the work history at EPA to meaningfully comment.

443 I was so excited to come back to EPA after a [redacted] with another federal agency. I joined [redacted] because they were the only ones hiring and now I know why. They create such a toxic environment for the employees that people cannot stand it for very long. When managers scream at employees during document reviews because of a problem that will cause a delay but improve an assessment and protect human health, that's a problem. When managers tell employees they will block any promotions, when they refuse to give out awards and when they give minimal ratings to staff because they are "just doing their job" despite doubling their output while enduring a pandemic, that's a problem. It is really apparent to anyone who cares to look that the embedded management (who have been around longer than just since the administration changed) at [redacted] do not care at all about doing the right thing and ensuring our regulations and highest scientific standards are met. They only care about bean-counting. How many [redacted] were completed in a quarter. That goes all the way up. Anything that interferes with the demand for more [redacted] is rejected. The staff are hurting - morale is awful and people are developing serious health effects from the stress and because they know management does not support them and views them as expendable.

444 Hopefully things will be better under the new Administration, but we still have career managers who were hostile to employees and EPA's mission. Need to root them out

445 deadlines drive deliverables, and when deadlines do not allow for time to come to team consensus commonly accepted scientific theory is abandoned for the desired policy decision

446 [redacted]

447 Scientific integrity is absolutely required to maintain the trust and value of the EPA's research. Researchers cannot just do what they want when they want. QA/QC must be followed in order to maintain scientific integrity.

448 Politics and the egos of certain individuals and leaders create an atmosphere of fear for those that want to speak out against what are viewed as scientifically flawed decisions

449 I think the Agency could better support and provide more materials for folks conducting scientific studies. I would like to see materials that outline the peer-review process and that highlight the process of getting a scientific study published (whether in a journal or on the EPA website). This would help improve the Agency's scientific integrity.

450 Depends on the Administration political associated with such as Democratic or Republican.

451 This has to be the most stupid survey I have ever taken at EPA. Please disregard any "Strongly Disagree" answer, since none of the questions about science are applicable to my role in [redacted]. You might have asked how my organization supports science at EPA, and that I would say [redacted] does a good job of providing the facility resources to conduct science. But you did not ask that. Please consider reissuing this survey with "NA" as an option, and please do NOT include my responses in any evaluation of responses, as they will skew your results in a completely meaningless way.

452 I am a [redacted] so I cannot consider 2019-2020 as a basis.

453 Political appointees need to let their scientists do the great work and avoid micromanaging to the extent practicable.

454 Science integrity exists tangentially. There is a hierarchical science team and if anyone with seniority disagrees with a decision for any reason, science conclusions are disregarded and ordered changed. As in change it or get fired.

455 In the context of [redacted], there is some attempt to structurally separate scientific decisionmaking from policy considerations (to the extent that they are distinct). However, there does not always appear to be a robust understanding at the staff level that each and every participant in the science-policy discussion has a responsibility to ensure that the right people are making science calls and the right people are making policy calls. Put another way, EPA's culture of scientific integrity in this media space would be better served if more of the stakeholders (policy, science, and legal staff) were all aware of exactly what role they play in that discussion. I am not always confident that this is the case.

456 Many developing projects (training in particular) and rules were either sidelined, pulled or simply ignored.

457 I am pretty new to the agency so I have little to add at this point.

458 [redacted]

459 [redacted]

460 Policy statements involving science are often arrived at under a tedious, limiting process. Example [redacted]. The executive summary and top line "findings" were so thoroughly dissected and narrowed that it was difficult for the public to understand one of main findings: not enough data exists to sit in judgement of this practice.

461 [redacted]

462 EPA has produced relevant and effective technology in the 1976-1978 that describes how to reduce carbon emissions. Very valuable, cost effective technology for the reduction of carbon emission for mobile sources was produces in the 1976-1978. However, all that published scientific information contradicts business decorum and that information is highly repressed. We are not able to use the work of EPA from the 1976-1978 timeframe to reduce carbon emissions. If MBA and lawyers had not suppressed the research on carbon reduction, on pollution reduction produced by EPA from 1976-1979, we would have reduced carbon emissions by 20%. We could still use the effective technology developed by EPA in the 1976-1979. But, if we speak out, we are shoved to performing work doing inventory of closets. Fear of death and reprisals is a strong motivator that keeps valuable information from public dissemination. The only support EPA offers for carbon reduction is the standard stuff that fill Exon Mobil commercials and BP commercials. Support for scientific research is deeply lacking within the United States. I have come across the work of chemical and electronic engineers, and experienced federal workers, university scholars who printed books from 1974 to 1978, that describes how to reduce carbon emissions , but all of this is highly suppressed, and extremely difficult. In reality, if you speak out, an environmental engineer at EPA will be delegated to offboarding.

463 (b) (6) . The scientists were terrified of releasing raw data without the opportunity to put it into context. They were fine with releasing their data, but only in formatted reports which were officially published. The fear was that data snippets would be taken out of context and politicized.

464 (b) (5)

465 (b) (6) consistent scientific integrity training; discussion with scientific integrity official is welcome. There seems to be a discrepancy between what staff understand and the training, however. Examples in the training would be helpful. For example, a disagreement about how a document is written (ie, it's quality) may or may not be a scientific integrity issue. As we do more with fewer resources, we may need to change our approach to how science is used (ie, how much detail is included in a (b) (6)), the 'risk' of a highly detailed vs less detailed document, and the potential impacts. These discussions must include everyone.

466 I am (b) (6) and my position does not involve science.

467 (b) (6), (b) (5) In the time since the Biden Administration took office, many offices from across the EPA have approached my team about collaborating, let alone to figure out how to re-incorporate EPA into their work. Multiple parts of (b) (6) have (b) (5) ; where, under the years of interest, that word had been removed.

468 If controversial, the scientifically-based opinions of experienced, technical staff are at times disregarded.

469 (b) (5) 3. Expressing one's scientific opinion should be an obligation of a career employee. Others don't need to agree with you, but expressing your scientifically-based opinions should be encouraged, not repressed.

470 (b) (5)

471 Responding to comments from management seems to be a rushed, not well thought out process. Incorporation of these comments quickly and swiftly is rewarded as an accomplishment. However understanding the substance, consistency of incorporating such comments across different (b) (6) is not often thought out. The rounds of re-work can be exhausting.

472 n/a

473 I am very proud of EPA's science overall, but science translation is VERY weak. Routinely, (and, I think, rightly) (b) (6) has been criticized for not viewing programs as its clients, which leads to good, but off-target research products. I was in a position in a previous role to recommend to (b) (6) leadership that it develop an office of science translation/liaison that actively works in the boundary space between programs and the research centers to market (b) (6) 's work. But this recommendation never got traction. (b) (5), (b) (6) The public doesn't trust our decisions because they can't always "follow along at home". To balance my critique, I should add that I am routinely impressed by (b) (6) scientists and their research. I was also very impressed by and proud of EPA/USG science when I had a chance to see (b) (6) and its work up close, both at the lab and in its regulatory development for the (b) (6) (including in the (b) (6) staff commentary on the models used in the (b) (6)).

474 As a member of (b) (6) and a founding member of the (b) (6) I strongly support agency efforts to promote and improve our culture of scientific integrity. Having worked at EPA through a number of administrations I have also witnessed varying degrees of executive branch support, budget, and priorities influenced by the administration and political appointees. Strong scientific integrity policies help protect scientists whose data or findings may be at odds with the political winds of the moment.

475 Sometimes I think the systems and policies put in place are the easiest path for managers to meet political standards without worrying about what the implementation of said system or policy will mean to the staff. (b) (6), (b) (5)

476 I definitely felt that employees could be penalized in some way - by those at or associated with HQ, not by career management at (b) (6) - (b) (5)

477 In all my years in government, my experiences in regard to scientific integrity at EPA (b) (6) has been abysmal. (b) (5), (b) (6)

478 I am (b) (6) I felt comfortable using science and felt supported in sharing and learning more science to make EPA's work robust and unbiased.

479 Regional leaders and my direct supervisors voice their support for scientific integrity, we take online ethics training, and are told how to report any instances where integrity may have been compromised. However I have informally heard that some employees don't feel comfortable with all scientific decisions or voicing their opinions if they contradict opinion of their supervisor.

480 Lack of support for ongoing professional development, especially in the Regions, is a big weakness. We hire smart and qualified people and then let them wither and get discouraged.

481 (b) (6), (b) (5)

482 (b) (5), (b) (6) - both of which now have little value - at personal and professional costs. It was a work environment dominated by fire drills and short-sighted thinking. Now, we can't even move on to (b) (6), we are now stuck in a perpetual reanalysis cycle to fix the short-sightedness of the last four years. If this administration would like to actually get on to the business of protecting human health and the environment, we need to start thinking more strategically, more streamlined, and with a bigger picture in mind. Otherwise we will spend the entirety of these four years just redoing the work assignments from the last four.

483 Career leadership in the region was rewarded only for outcomes consistent with the policy choices being made by political leadership. Recommendations from career scientists were discouraged, as was routine data sharing with sister agencies. Often career staff with the necessary scientific knowledge were excluded from decision-making meetings with political leadership.

484 Lack of support form previous administration made my research look irrelevant, however there was more support from fellow scientist in (b) (6)

485 (b) (5)

486 I am a (b) (6) it would be difficult for me to comment on most of the questions

487 How did the agency whose stated mission is to protect human health and the environment deal with COVID-19? When you read that question did you start planning a literature review of double-blind randomized studies or did you begin formulating justifications as to how the agency performed acceptably? You are the problem!

488 (b) (5), (b) (6)

489 The lack of support for scientific integrity created a log-jam when trying to get products approved and cleared for release.

490 I've been impressed by (b) (6) open door policy, and her clear training efforts across ORD. When I did bring an issue to (b) (6) for consultation I appreciated her willingness to listen, advise, and keep confidence.

491 I am in (b) (6), and while in previous years I had served on a number of internal working groups for regulatory actions, there seemed to be little to no opportunity for (b) (6) scientists to provide input into some of the major regulatory changes, such as those related to (b) (6).

492 I don't have specific things to speak to - I only heard from peers or the press that EPA was making poor decisions that were not based on science or the law.

493 In some positive support - my front line manager has by in large has been the biggest advocate for scientific integrity and their staff. They stand by and defend their scientists and my critiques have everything to do with management above the 2nd line. Branch chiefs deserve significant praise for what they've had to deal with and the difficult roles they've been in. Where scientific integrity fails at the agency is how the research budget and staffing budget works. The reliance on contracts and term limited appointments vs. permanent staff with expertise and background, results in significant time in training staff that go on to leave. This time could be spent on research and informing program offices. This issue is only worsening and management continues to fail to recognize this. Further, the lack of upward mobility of non management scientific staff results in them leaving the lab, which cripples research programs. I just listened to the recent (b) (6) and when someone inquired about the distribution of hires. Management just informed us that the hires that have happened in the past year and a half have been 80% non management staff hires. WHERE ARE THEY? Risk assessors and data curators are not scientific staff hires. These are not positions that are generating primary research information that the program offices require. WE DO NOT HAVE THE STAFF BOTH IN VOLUME AND IN EXPERTISE TO COMPLETE PRODUCTS ASSIGNED IN THE (b) (6) ! Contracting the labor out is not the answer!! We need permanent scientists that can sustain and continue for years.

494 In my program, I often feel there is pressure to have the conclusions of my analysis of scientific data support a policy alternative that seems to be preferred by management. When the data are not a clear match, it seems the first response from management is to ask where we can be flexible, make assumptions, or explain things away. Here is a recent example: (b) (6), (b) (5) I have other examples of situations like this from my work in my current work unit.

495 In my work, during the prior administration, bowling charts and the quotas associated with the bowling charts took precedence over good thinking, and priorities were set not by what was best for the environment or human health, but by how many bowling chart commitments could be met.

496 (b) (5), (b) (6)

497 N

498 It was not always clear if political leadership decisions were consistent with the data provided by staff.

499 My personal experience has been that EPA provides the support and resources I need to ensure the scientific integrity of my work. However, I have heard from others that this was not the case across the agency during the Trump administration. I was not personally affected in that way, however, and there was no change to the support I received in the form of resources or pressure to influence outcomes, so I can't validate what I was told.

500 It was impossible not to view the management of (b) (6) as cynically protecting Administrative policy decisions from scientific information that could make those decisions appear to be poorly supported.

501 Some rulemaking policies were geared towards favoring industrial activities by deregulating

502 The political leadership over the past four years showed a lack of intellectual curiosity and was motivated by interests other than the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. (b) (6) Morale suffered across the country.

503 None at this time

504 So much for anonymous responses. (b) (5) None of these have been rectified. However, the latest memo from the EPA administrator indicates that transparency is a high priority. But, so far some managers are still fearful of special interests. I can only hope.

505 I am a scientist at EPA. When I started my career, I was invited to meetings with policy and decision makers so that I could explain the science if asked. I no longer have that access. The same goes for talking with the Press - I used to be able to talk to reporters - no longer. My experience is that our scientific conclusions get soft-pedaled to upper management by middle management according to what the middle managers think that the upper managers will accept. Middle managers, at least in the past 2 years, have been kept in "acting" positions to foster a fear of reprisal. Its sad. When Lisa Jackson led EPA, she talked about transparency using a metaphor that we were all in a fishbowl. I was even invited to a conference call that she was on - she really walked the talk. Its been a long downhill since. What has substantially changed is the flavor of politics and the extent to which politicians will use their power to get what they want.

506 Changes made under the last administration did not support scientific independence or integrity. The last administration was very pro industry, and looked to loosen regulations protecting US citizens health, our air and water. The composition of the science review boards is an excellent example. Just as you cannot negotiate with yourself, so you cannot adequately propose and support regulations that your industry employer, who pays your salary, opposes. Not and keep your job.

507 In my work, I have found that the career scientists have a very high level of scientific integrity.

508 The previous presidential administration had earned a well-deserved reputation for penalizing scientists that spoke up about (b) (5). The fears of retribution proved to be well-founded. While EPA does not have any influence over a particular administration, the Agency is responsible for developing structures to protect its scientists and their (very valid, well researched) data, results and conclusions. More clear and aggressive protective measures are needed to protect scientific integrity and assure that scientist are free from retribution from any one administration. If the adminstration's actions in FY19 taught us anything, let it be that greater protections of scientific integrity are needed.

509 Scientific integrity with respect to EPA's national-level evaluation and regulation of chemical hazards (e.g., pesticides and other toxic chemical health assessments) was completely derailed by Trump administration appointees representing a political agenda of the chemical industry.

510 I disliked how (b) (6) was dissolved and consolidated into a centralized comms. office under the (b) (6). It meant that on average the comms. staff assigned to tasks had less background on my work, I had to spend more time explaining things to them, (b) (5). The post-Pruitt years of the previous Administration were better from a scientific integrity perspective for EPA than the time under Pruitt, but still not great.

511 I manage (b) (6) While scientific (and fiduciary) integrity is required, management lacks FTE resources to allow sufficient time to adequately ensure that the latest science is discussed and maintained. Staff are required to learn on their own time, with few focused courses available.

512 Broader than (b) (6) - there is a broader societal phenomena of debasing/demeaning individuals that is drastically harming discourse and Socratic dialogue nationally. Empathetic listening training towards those with whom we disagree should become part of the scientific process to help reverse this trend.
513 (b) (5)
514 There is always talks about making sure opinions are objective.
515 No comments
516
Over the past four years, the management in EPA HQ has been rife with unethical decisions and dubious science. In general, this didn't affect my job that much. On the Regional level, several years ago, I (b) (5), (b) (6) The Division would function so much better and have much higher morale if the managers/supervisors with low EQ and poor communication skills were not the ones setting the tone. Even though this is anonymous, I don't want you to share this comment with anyone in (b) (6) I was about to delete the whole thing but decided to submit it. Please do not share this.
517 i was able to review publications and provide my comments without any external pressures from management
518 In many high profile cases, the Trump EPA Administration rolled back long-standing scientifically-sound regulations and positions based on politically-motivated ends, and not based on rigorous sound science. (b) (5) The new Administration was granted its motion in court to vacate this rule, and EPA has since issued a new rule to undo the secret science regulation.
519 From 2017-2020, I was encouraged not to use the words (b) (5) in my regular email updates to outside organizations.
520 My first line supervisor always supports the correctness of the work over being timely.
521 No thank you.
522 I don't specifically work in the scientific community, however, I have friends and acquaintances that do and it is disheartening to hear them express their displeasure about their work not being supported by members associated with the previous administration.
523 lack of transparency at higher career levels
524 n/a
525 na
526 Look at who (b) (6) ethics officials are and how and they were selected and by who. This will tell you everything you need to know about the lack of integrity at (b) (6)
527 In the last Administration, decisions were made to ignore (b) (5) issues that are scientifically valid and prioritize decisions that favored industry regardless of environmental impact. When the political leaning goes against the science, scientists no longer have an outlet to voice scientific findings that are contrary to the policy decisions.
528 Our 1st and 2nd line supervisors listen and show support, but some of the issues we face never seem to change. We work with lots of stakeholders and co-regulators that belittle us and our scientific work and yet we continue to travel down this path. I'm not sure where the breakdown in real support is within our group.
529 EPA is not recruiting enough scientists and engineers to meet future challenges. Too many new recruits are coming in with soft skills (backgrounds in policy and planning without strong science or engineering training).
530 Senior managers need to be grounded in the mission of EPA with media program experience a must. Only then will they truly appreciate the importance of scientific integrity. In my opion this requires appropriate experience and knowledge. Over the past several years in (b) (6) senior managers have been hired with zero experience working in a media programs or similar settings and/or minimal training education in a scientific discipline. Focus is on other areas: we often here the terms "business requirements" but what is missed is the "business" of EPA. And that is scientific in its nature. A culture change is needed.
531 In support for a culture of scientific integrity, there is constant communication from EPA management on scientific basis for many of the decisions made.
532
I have heard stories about instances where science was changed or played down or altered in some way from colleagues in (b) (6). I do not have specific instances to cite, however.
533 Climate Change is real.
534
(b) (6), (b) (5) It's messed up and the reason i'm looking to get out.
535 The Trump administration seemed to focus on a distinct lack of transparency and a disdain for science. Policies and potentially useful guidance were shelved and conversations muted. If was an incredible frustrating time for scientist and those who truly believe in the Agency's mission.
536 Trump appointees actively worked to manage the Science Advisory Board in such a way as to prevent criticism of Trump's rollbacks of environmental protections.
537
I feel like the Agency is moving in the right direction. It was disheartening to see what happened to us during the last administration. I think that an important step might be to put into place policies and guidelines that would maybe make it so that the Agency maintains its scientific integrity, including how it communicates with the media and the public at large, no matter who the political appointees are.
538 I observed first hand that data was cherry-picked to support it. Managers will imply that you are not a team player if you challenge such efforts. Promotions will be put on hold
539
Often, completing tasks, eliminating backlogs, and getting stats up supersedes scientific integrity, especially as it concerns environmental justice. For instance, demographic or historical factors may not be considered in an environmental justice analysis because the conclusions arising from those data may suggest that permit limits/conditions need to change. Apart from environmental justice, the Region tends to rely on historical practices for justifying why it implements certain policies. This dynamic leads to staff not understanding what the technical bases upon which policies (that they are now relying on) were; the technical bases for these policies may have been contrived in 20 or more years ago, and the documents containing them are not easily found.
540 full support for agency mission
541 We should have a strong peer review program that all research must be vetted through like a SAB-lite that ensures everything is peer reviewed beyond a branch chief and a couple friends. The TQB board is more rigorous than some of our staff peer reviews of manuscripts or internal reports and then these are linked to data and sometimes still released to the public. Sure, we all take ethics training.. but do we practice it? Do you?
542 When you have to report up to someone that was appointed by and Administration that does not believe in science, trying to basically shut EPA down, and does not care about human health or the environment lack of scientific integrity is just the tip of the iceberg.
543 The Administrator's decision on the (b) (5) reflected political expediency and an effort to give concessions ("be reasonable" "give them something") to (b) (6), but was not underpinned by science or regulation. Implementation of the decision is now a challenge.
544
Establishing and maintaining a culture of scientific integrity is vital to achieving the Agency's mission. If normative or policy judgements creep into the conduct or communication of scientific work (including economic science), then objective science will not be possible and the Agency will become more and more of a yo-yo regulatory agency - with each administration just manipulating the science to undo whatever they didn't like about the previous administration's actions. In my (b) (6) at the Agency, I have always felt a strong support for scientific integrity from my career management. In my experience, the support for scientific integrity among political management within (b) (6) and program offices has varied over time and by topic. Overall, however, more and more I find that even when there is stated support for scientific integrity, senior leadership imposes such unrealistically tight schedules on scientific products and regulatory actions that it becomes inevitable that everyone down the chain has to cut corners and the quality of science, and the ability to communicate the science to decision makers, becomes compromised.
545 I fear the ability to bring credible and substantial issues related to scientific data fraud and similar concerns forward to the person responsible for obtaining reports of scientific integrity issues within (b) (6)
546
Tried our best to keep the contractors working at home as long as possible to help with the science. Once they were allowed back into the lab, made sure that they were safe and could do their research.
547 During the last two years verbal support for scientific integrity was available, but when it came to making science-based decisions...politics won out
548 I have seen regional management not listen to regional and HQ staff about the (b) (5), (b) (6)
549 Senior management supports and encourages the culture of scientific integrity, but fail to put money where it is needed for laboratory equipment.
550 Information is dummy downed, that is posted on our web sites, to the point of being unusable. (b) (5)
551
I didn't pay attention the last 2 years due of the lack of accountability demonstrated by the administration and the intense stress keeping up with it caused in 2017. Over my career, I have seen " answer shopping" and " waiting" for any science that supports a policy goal. Specifically, (b) (5)
552
Support was generally provided at the career staff level; however, those career staff were themselves too fearful of repercussions/too unprotected for their concerns to have any meaningful impact.
553 There seems to be a growing lack of transparency with regards to policy and science. (b) (5) There seems to be an increase in closed door discussion that has a direct impact on the workload causing undue stress on the workforce.

554 It is unfair to ask about [redacted] and its divisions when questions are based on experiences in the last 2 years. Those organizations did not exist. By including them, your response statistics will not present valid results because you did not always include the answer option of "N/A or unable to judge".
555 COVID derailed everything.
556 The science at my laboratory comes first. The lab presents the answers that the science generates regardless of what the expected outcomes were.
557 There is no support for attending true scientific conferences, just conferences of organizations of the programs we oversee.
558 There were many hindrances during 2019 & 2020.
559 [redacted]
560 The political management of the last administration took intentional steps to interfere with the integrity of science conducted by the agency and disregarded science in policy decision-making, obfuscating reality in favor of political goals.
561 National policy decisions and regulatory changes have been too much influenced by politics.
562 [redacted]
563 None
564 EPA demonstrated a complete lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity.
565 The political support for scientific integrity seemed to wane during the last two years.
566
I lean towards lack of support. Where is scientific integrity? A document and a few sessions does not impact culture. Where has the team been for the last two years. I hear talk but I see no action. I encourage a a task force composed of real scientists (at all levels), Union leadership, an outsider, etc. instead of the usual pack of management lackeys' and syncopates.
567 in my work experience implementing a regulatory program, our managers and especially our regional partners do not hold state governments with primacy for the [redacted] accountable to the regulations that they are obligated to follow. Our regs were ostensibly backed by scientific data, so our failure to hold [redacted] accountable is also a failure to support the integrity of the science behind those regulations.
568 Corralling scientific integrity by way of personal politics does not foster trust.
569
[redacted]
570 Decisions within the agency are top-downed but it must be supported bottom-up. Subject matter experts views and visions need to be consider more seriously so that we are making the decision based on the data and science.
571 [redacted] There was no culture of integrity at the lab above the section chief position.
572 [redacted]
573 [redacted]
574 [redacted] has lost sight of the foundation of high quality data and is only focused on preparing the right paperwork. This results in projects getting so bogged down in "dotting the i's and crossing the t's" that we've become completely impotent. Our ability to actually perform work to protect public health and the environment has completely dissolved. The whole goal of [redacted] to expedient projects has not been accomplished due to QA's interference and delays in contracting.
575 da
576 We seem to be moving away from valuing scientific and technical expertise by reducing ability for 1301 and 819 staff to reach GS-13 or GS-14 levels in the region. These opportunities seem to be limited to superfund in our region, yet all programs to be able to invest in this important expertise. This was not always the case during my career at EPA. We had technical 14 positions and these staff were true experts that we could access in our program areas.
577
I encountered a situation in a previous organization (outside of [redacted]) within EPA more than six years ago, [redacted] I was not able to continue to work in this atmosphere and decided to look for opportunities outside of this program office. I admit the survey is focused on experience since 2019. so this narrative may not be applicable. I did not report this incident then for fear of losing the job. I am not interested to dig into this matter further. Also, a high profile assessment was delayed by leaders beyond the then National Center for Environmental Assessment leadership. This comment is from the organization different from what is described in the above paragraph.
578 Welcoming atmosphere encourages discussion about scientific integrity
579 NA
580 I just don't hear leaders or first line supervisors have aconversation about scientific integrity or mentioning its importance as part of the conversation during course of business. If there were a case where scientific integrity shone itself (or did not) it would be good to hear about these during all hands meeting, branch meetings, etc. If this is an important aspect of EPA, I would expect it to be included during the normal conduct of business and EPA culture. A policy can go into effect but if there's no culture or behaviors to support, reflect and demonstrate those values, the policy truly lacks any teeth and credibility.
581 Lack of support due to previous administration and government agenda and priorities
582
Lack of support for the development of scientific knowledge by failing to provide high quality training in the sciences, including communications, statistics and other applicable topics. Thank you!
583 The political leadership in [redacted] discarded evidence that was contrary to the presidents opinion and would not entertain any data, experience or knowledge of staff that was counter to that opinion. Even in cases where staff supported the policy goals of the administration, the political leadership wanted to either make the decision appear to be the based on non-existent staff analysis, biased understanding of data or anecdotal information from close associates unrelated to EPA.
584 Pushing in vitro testing as a panacea for all risk assessment without proper validation is questionable
585 1. [redacted]. The agency has not responded in a meaningful way, either with new science or regulatory actions based on science. 2. [redacted] Hopefully national program staff are also aware of this historic problem. This is an issue that has remained for several administrations and will be very difficult to resolve.
586 The agency leader who make the ultimate decisions seem to think that they know more than the scientists.
587 Climate change, due to human activity, is a conclusion at the EPA. [redacted] we should maintain scientific integrity and leave the politics to others.
588 Almost exclusively over the past 4 years have scientific integrity been undermined and deprioritized for my work at EPA. My prior 15 years of EPA service almost always felt supportive of scientific integrity, and open to at least hearing the scientific analyses and results for different circumstances. In my experience, the Agency tends to support scientific integrity and the conclusions to which it leads, while recent political appointees demonstrated no concern for either.
589 The Agency has been doing SI training during the last few years on a more regular basis which has created a sense of support.
590
Reviews of materials went to higher levels than in the past with the explicit reasons given that were to have scientific information that supported what appeared to be pre-determined policy positions.
591 Data analysis is too often outsourced to contractor support so we don't trust feds to conduct analysis or present results because they don't have the necessary skills to do so. At the same time, training, even basic training, for data analysis and research is denied because it is not relevant unless you are classified as a scientists.
592 I've always taken scientific integrity as a given, but I have read about instances where scientists or technicians demonstrated otherwise, so it would be neglectful to not support a culture, policy, and accountability for scientific integrity.
593
Commented in previous question. [redacted]. In fact, management took an outsized role in determining the outcome. [redacted], there were significant changes in leadership with the [redacted] that was combative and questioned scientific results. However, the process took long enough to outlive several leaders.
594 Policy decisions made counter to the science
595 The last administration cared more about optics than what the science showed. The public will be harmed by these decisions. Science was not being followed with [redacted]
596 In the previous administration the decision-making from higher up was opaque and did not always align with the logistics of the projects at the branch or section level. In my current position, even mandates like A3 and Lean project management became impediments that discouraged people from pursuing more research projects.
597 Lack of support- [redacted] Support- the team support of reviewing and quality assurance of the data we work with
598 Over the past 7 years or so there has been a much greater emphasis on and education about scientific integrity. That's great, regardless of the way the political leadership changed in the middle of that period and did not necessarily model good patterns of scientific integrity. But the infrastructure, and processes, and policies are in place in a very helpful way that i do not remember existing 20 or so years ago.

599 I left many comments blank, since they pertained to work during 2019-2020 and I came onboard in (b) (6) . Since December 7, 2020, I have enjoyed many opportunities to reach out to to science/topic experts within the region and at Headquarters. These experts have been willing to educated me, and have even reached out to me later to make me aware of pertinent trainings or documents that will help me learn more.
600 Setting research priorities was not done transparently in the previous StRAP planning. (b) (6) discussions with program office leadership on priorities should be done in the open to ensure the integrity of decisions made about what research we undertake and why, and allow for sufficient scientific input to those decisions.
601 I found the (b) (5) troubling, although these did not directly impact my work.
602
Political appointees are the largest impediments to EPA's progress towards Mission Goals. Actually, this applies to either Democrat or Republican administrations. Congress should strengthen EPA's authorities to enforce and support compliance with environmental regulations and statutes and require any current administration to execute that Mission without the power to alter and hinder progress. FOR EXAMPLE (b) (5) Appointees, especially those who are not appointed from within the EPA, are unqualified and unwilling to hold science above politics. Once solution would be to require any administration to choose appointees from within EPA ranks of those staff and management who have been with the agency for a minimum of 10 years, proving dedication to fulfilling EPA's Mission.
603 Many decisions were made at high levels to suppress scientific integrity and transparency, (b) (5)
604 Over the last two year survey time period I have not been in a position to personally judge the process for publication of politically sensitive scientific products. However, based on the policies of the previous administration it was clear that policies were disconnected from the current science.
605 At an Agency level the past several years, I believe there has been a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity. Why? (b) (5)
606 Career leadership within the agency appears to have lesser views of supervisors attending and participating in scientific events and practices. This view is in contradiction to the need to keep abreast of the science and potential incoming areas of relevance to program offices.
607 Upper management decision making was entirely driven by political desires. Lower level management frequently appeased this.
608 NA
609 no basis to judge
610
A lack of support was demonstrated where scientific information indicated work was needed to implement EPAs strategic mission and address an issue, but that issue was not a priority for the agency and/or Region, and resources were not prioritized to support it. Prioritization of limited resources can be used to stifle critical work, by never prioritizing an issue.
611
If our administration doesn't acknowledge that climate change is real, this agency will never have scientific integrity. This is not reflective of the current administration. It is a general statement.
612 I have only been with the agency (b) (6)
613 There was a decision that was supposed to be made on a scientific/data and regulatory basis. However, political appointees were involved, the decision was rushed, and EPA subject matter experts were not consulted during the process, even though our internal SOP for dealing with such decisions requires it. After the change of administration, the EPA had to address the issue again and clarify some things regarding the previously-issued decision.
614 Data collection and evaluation takes time. Too much emphasis on compromise and deferred risk in order or to satisfy arbitrary timelines
615 Every single thing my division does is documented multiple ways and vetted by many, many other people.
616 Comprehensive training on human health and ecological risk assessment was required for all new staff in risk management positions in (b) (6) The twice a month trainings lasted for approximately 6 months and ensured new employees had a forum to ask questions and get answers in a safe, supportive environment.
617 Scientific integrity is critical to protect the public but managers intimidated staff to pass chemicals above all else.
618 Getting tasks done and padding resumes seems to take precedence over data quality.
619 Please see previous
620 No comments
621 In (b) (6), we have very detailed and complicated debates for all of our decisions and listen to everyone's opinion/points before making a decision. The decisions are always based on science and the overall weight of evidence of risk assessment.
622 Decisions on projects I am on often ignore recommendations from the "experts" and come to conclusions and decisions that are politically motivated.
623 My personal outlook on scientific integrity required that I exercise my professional commitment to an infusion of scientific integrity on each component of research planning and research accomplishment. This has been my personal coda for the (b) (6) years of employment by the EPA.
624 Our Management and QA manager fully support this and take steps to ensure quality work being done
625 no opinion
626 (b) (6) has Scientific Integrity Leader for (b) (6), so we are and have been very supportive.
627
(b) (5), (b) (6)
628 trainings were offered to support awareness of scientific integrity
629
(b) (5), (b) (6)
630 (b) (5)
631 No comment
632 I believe that the culture of scientific integrity at EPA is quite strong, save for during the past administration. There may often be arguments over science policy, but these discussions are an important factor in maintaining scientific integrity.
633 (b) (6) .
634
There has been a metastasis of administrative paperwork for research at EPA with the thin justification that it is to promote quality assurance in science research. Research staff are completely unable to provide timely results and products because of the excessive and crippling load of QA in the form of QAPPs, SDMPs, internal reviews and other documents. These add very little to the actual quality of research, particularly computer modeling work, and consume countless resources. Products that peer-reviewed externally are not noticeably improved by the burdensome internal procedures of EPA. The taxpayers would be rightfully furious to know how much time and money is wasted on these requirements, and horrified to understand how (b) (6) has ground itself to a complete halt on environmental science research that would be used to protect the public welfare. We have a CRISIS now! The QA infrastructure within (b) (6) and EPA at large is completely out of hand and we must rethink its role in order to be an organization that operates with scientific integrity.
635 none
636 I would say there is a lack of scientific integrity, as many scientific procedures are not well documented for reproducibility. I think there is not as much clarity from upper management on why decisions are made. The science is not separate from its policy implications.
637 (b) (5), (b) (6)
638 (b) (5), (b) (6) . I have worked for multiple Administrations, and so have a sense of the scale of support for scientific integrity.
639 (b) (5), (b) (6)
640 Dissatisfied with political leadership's ignoring and dismissal of scientific findings
641 I think the last administration's refusal to ban (b) (5) says it all.
642 In my position, I feel supported with a culture of scientific integrity.

643 I have worked for the EPA for many years (b) (6)). Within that time-frame, overall, I have felt that EPA is an agency that seeks to uphold the requirements for scientific integrity. I have generally been supported in my endeavors to voice recommendations based on best available scientific information, to seek out and receive support for professional development and training where/when needed (when funding has been available). The areas of critique that I see in the agency are: 1) policy decisions are not always adequately documented separately from the technical/scientific recommendations, 2) under the recent administration the agency went down-hill significantly with politics and political appointee interference with decision making that I would say verged on interference with Scientific Integrity (b) (5)), 3) there is a need to improve equity, diversity and inclusion in scientific positions at the agency so that there is broader representation of women, women of color, LGBTQ, and BIPOC voices and that voices are heard, respected and treated equally to white male voices. More work is needed to address both the insitutional trauma caused by the last 4 years as well as the systemic and institutional barriers that exist in EPA because they are part of the larger pervasive issues of our society.

644 I have have worked at EPA for over (b) (6) . I have directly involved with (b) (6) I have learned that political considerations always come into the picture, regardless of which political party is in control of the White House.

645 Overall my impression was that the culture was not supportive of the current administration at the time.

646 No comments.

647 Scientific integrity training has increasingly been a focus of the Agency; however in practice, the Agency improve the culture by paying more attention to underlying information and information gaps in risk assessments/risk conclusions.

648 In my experience, political pressures get in EPA's way of decisions that should be make to protect human health and the environment. If there was a choice between the two political pressures vs protection of human health and the environment, political pressures would win-out.

649 The previous Administration cared more about the message that the White House was sending, which was an anti-science stance, than it did about science writ large. All messages were top-down as opposed to bottom-up from scientists and experts. When experts conveyed something that did not fit the White House message, then EPA politicals simply ignored them.

650 A culture of scientific integrity at the EPA depends on the policies at the head of government and is embedded in the politics of the day.

651 Sometimes politics/for the greater good/unintended consequences have to drive decisions.

652 Lack of support (b) (5) demonstrates a lack of support for scientific integrity. The last Presidential administration demonstrated a lack of support for environmental protection programs and was verbally and financially hostile to the existence of EPA.

653 Mid and upper management are overly concerned with 'looking good' in front of their own managers and do not value dissenting opinions, debate and controversy. At briefings, everyone is expected to 'fall in line' with the prevailing opinion. Honesty is squelched. The briefing process is fundamentally flawed at EPA and this has been the case for decades. I don't feel I can share my honest opinion with any management but my first line supervisor.

654 Trump administration made more efforts to get (b) (6) to censor ourselves than I have ever seen any other administration make. Unfortunately, especially in the early years, (b) (6) often somewhat complied, (b) (5) .

655 Learning opportunities for thoroughly understood data via inhouse statistic training.

656 i don't think there is a lack of support - but i do think there is extreme pressure to meet deadlines that do not allow the appropriate level of rigor to be done. There is a phrase that everyone wants things done good, fast and cheap; however, you can only do two of them. And lets face it "cheap" is already accounted for because we do not have the staff for our workload. So that mean you can either have it done fast, which means it is "the best we could do with the time we had" or it is done well, which likely means we missed a deadline. At least in (b) (6) - we need more people - our work could get better and it would help with moral overall which could help with retention and all of that would equal huge wins. But when we are told to do more "fast and good" and have great integrity - the obvious support of more worker bees is missing

657 I strongly support a culture of scientific integrity because without it, we run the risk of losing the public's trust. If that ever happens, our credibility will be shot (and the Agency could become obsolete).

658 Admittedly the heavily and unreasonably increased workload many of us have experienced over the past few years has contributed to the aforementioned problems; however, the issues caused by the first and second level managers are not a secret, yet they continue unabated.

659 Scientific integrity at EPA is about who you know and whether a senior level person will support your ideas. Eager managers, wanting to advance their careers quickly will redirect policy and science to deliver a product that senior managers and appointees support. This is the culture with (b) (6) and has been for decades. Some senior managers balance scientific integrity in the decision making process and some do not.

660 Policies have not appeared to be based on sound science. (b) (5)

661 When it's obvious that the political folks at EPA were making decisions about how to proceed before they even get a briefing on a topic, and when those decisions appear to mirror the President's wishes and tweets, it doesn't really feel like a place where what the science tells those folks matters.

662 (b) (5), (b) (6)

663 See earlier comments. During my long tenure at EPA I have witnessed and experienced retaliation, bullying, attempts to use my research for my supervisors own, sexism in the early years, and now "length of Professional experiences". Aged scientists have experienced pressure to retire and denied research opportunities, resources, and respect more recently often by those in management positions that are the same age. There have been many promotions of unqualified individuals based on behavior/favoritism rather than qualifications and scientific merit.

664 (b) (5), (b) (6)

665 By providing valuable review to projects' outputs and outcomes

666 Statements from senior leadership contain opinions and statements not fully supported by science or incompatible with alternative view supported by science

667 N/A

668 In all my (b) (6) at the Agency, I have never seen such a lack of engagement and trust with political and career staff across policy or scientific issue.

669 (b) (5), (b) (6)

670 Political direction limited some of our policy and how we communicated

671 Projects were funded to please political appointees without any regard for science. It was a pet project of previous regional administrator.

672 N/A

673 the program review of peer-review publication could take a long time with low value added.

674 The past EPA Administrator seemed to lack any basis in scientific anything and appeared to be a mouthpiece for the President with no experience in Government at any level unlike other administrators in the past when confronted with the data for the state of Human Health and the Environment and EPAs role he was unconcerned and was focused on integrating a pre arranged agenda not based in science or data meant to discourage seasoned employees to retire or leave the agency taking all institutional knowledge with them

675 I do not believe EPA promotes scientific integrity after seeing the political pressure exerted by the Trump administration to rewrite landmark regulations. When we allow politics to make our decisions we lose our integrity and trust with the public.

676 Many controversial policy decisions will require a balancing of factors. Scientific integrity may be one consideration among others. Transparency about the reasons underlying decisionmaking will help address the intermingling of scientific conclusions with other decision factors.

677 Politics has created an environment in which dissenting opinions are not tolerated.

678 Top-down decision-making without a detailed knowledge of the subject that lead to a find the science to justify this decision approach

679 I think different scientific opinions are not valued. If you are a creative thinker and challenge "traditional" senior scientists or many managers, they try to stifle your enthusiasm and your ideas. I have found two senior career managers that really understand what creative thinking and science can be -- so they have helped me. There is far too much top down decision-making. Remember the "O" ring disaster and many other disasters that were predicted by senior scientists/engineers and management blocked or ignored these predictions. I think also that there is a huge gap between the Scientific Integrity Officials who meet quarterly with the Scientific Integrity Official and all of the rest of the senior scientists and staff scientists and lower level managers in the Agency. T

680 People get emotionally attached to their ideas, and will look at data to support their perspective, rather than look at data from an unattached perspective. People who are willing to look at data with an unattached perspective are demonized if their conclusions do not match that of the "narrative".

681 Little to no emails sent to (b) (6) employees. No Regional "champion" to push the topic

682 (b) (5)

683 Over the past two years, it was extremely difficult to get anything approved.

684 Scientific integrity has always been top priority and received utmost support.

685 The changing of focus area and Agency priorities that cycle with changes in the political leadership of the agency has not been conducive to sustain high-level research. Long-term research was under big challenges under the previous admiration, lack sustained high-level research.

686 (b) (5)

687 In some cases, [redacted]), technical reviews felt rushed so that we could issue a decision that favored industry or so that we would not hold up any timelines for other agencies [redacted]). This meant that many reviews were not as in depth as they could have been.
688 I think generally career levels still maintain a culture of scientific integrity. But, political influences on how science is used to inform decisions has caused some skepticism on scientific integrity. It would be good for the agency to work hard to remedy that skepticism. I also think there may not be clarity on what constitutes a "lapse in scientific integrity" to make it a clear decision whether to report such lapses.
689 integrity of Division Director questionable
690
I have been at EPA for near [redacted] A lot of time has been on smaller subjects so not high profile and hence a bit more freedom to be creative and have integrity through the process to rulemaking. When high profile topics are involved there are some on the team who feel they know better than those who are assigned the task and have done research to support the potential for [redacted] . Again, it is on the small stuff and not the major contribution topics to [redacted] .
691 I witnessed decisions that overturned long standing agency practices and guidelines that were based on implementing regulations that were created to protect public health
692
I have always felt that the people I work closely with support and are concerned with the scientific integrity of the work I am involved in. I have never felt my concerns were not heard or considered.
693
Blood lead levels need to be addressed on a national level and they need consistency. [redacted] They are everywhere. The science to recognize measure all their different forms needs to be developed more quickly. These issues were not addressed with rigor in the last 2 years.
694 Resource constraints and increasing work situation is taking attention of the quality.
695 a lot of unwise decisions or inactions were made or occured based on political pressure and not for the people/environment even though the analytical data showed otherwise
696 no comment
697
This experience does not come from my role as an EPA researcher, but as a citizen. As a researcher I do not now have a good handle on the politics, I don't know who many of the political appointees are. [redacted] From within my position at the [redacted] , I have only ever had the highest confidence in the commitment to scientific integrity.
698 We always need to respond to the priorities of the Administration, which means that some programs are favored or disfavored. But allowing politicals to censor and delay our science is a problem that I don't know how you are going to address. Apparently, if they want to, they can.
699 When making policy decisions, the court of public opinion was given just as much, or more weight than scientific integrity. This often plays out in the amount of time and number of staff given to review scientific data. A lack of resources is used to justify processes that don't fully account for scientific integrity.
700 Lack of transparency with Regions on issues with national importance.
701 I strongly supported. We have been producing very credible and defensible data.
702 It has been disappointing to see technical reports get suppressed because of the sectors they represent. This has happened under the Trump and Obama administrations. There has not been an issue with the employees, but there was a desire not to ruffle political or industry feathers.
703 no opinion
704 [redacted]
705 During the 1990's EPA established the Center for Environmental Information and Statistics (CEIS.) It was an attempt to have independent statisticians and data scientists work on issues. and related data, to better communicate the science and supporting data behind performance measures and policy decisions across the agency. It wasn't perfect but in was an attempt at helping the agency do it's job better and assist the public's understanding of what we do and how well we are doing it.
706 never ever have I encountered, personally, and lack of support for scientific integrity in R7
707 Very supportive!
708
The Trump Administration did not support scientific staff or managers if they reached a different conclusion about their scientific findings or proposed solutions or path forward. I realize it's difficult to remove all political influence (regardless which party is in the White House) from a government agency, especially a regulatory one like EPA, but the Trump Administration took it to a new low. Everything they did was to essentially gut or weaken environmental laws, rules and practices. What the public saw and heard was bad, but they didn't know how bad it was from the inside of the agency.
709 The Agency generally does not do a great job of separating the science from policy. Regardless of the Administration, that line gets blurred. It was just very pronounced in the Trump Administration. In regulation making, OMB often impedes scientific integrity.
710 Trump administration demonstrated a profound lack of support for scientific integrity and scientific supporting data for decision making. This had little push-back from EPA leaders and officials, which was disappointing. This trend seems to be improving with new leadership. Scientific integrity should support looking at ALL problems with a site as they can be identified rather than just what is obvious or previously outlined. All contaminant sources should be considered.
711 Over the years, I was able to attend various technical relating to my job performance.
712 As stated earlier - since the advent of the new administration in Jan. 2021 social scientific facts and opinions regarding equity, inclusion and diversity are no longer valued, but rather only one-sided, political determinations on these issues are valued or even discussed. While EID is not central to my job, the new administration's disregard for social scientific facts and opinions on EID is incongruent with the current push for overall scientific integrity and comes across as rather hypocritical.
713 Fiscal year pressure of "beans" is terrible for a culture of scientific integrity. Managers are desperate to get "beans" in order to get their bonuses. Science suffers because of this.
714 Climate change is one of the most pressing and important issues for the human race, and it was shocking to see the lack of emphasis, support, and progress for climate science over calendar years 2019-2020.
715
I have tried not to base my answers on information reported in the media about EPA decisions that I had little to do with. Inevitably, some of that creeps into my views. My opinion was affected by the fact that [redacted]
716 In my experience the encouragement of insuring the culture of scientific integrity is encouraged by my 1st and 2nd line supervisors.
717 none
718 Subject matter experts (SMEs) were not allowed to talk to 2nd line supervisors or career office SESs due to our low status of being non-supervisors (over hierarchical). Consequently, all decision-making rested upon 2nd line supervisor's and above ability to communicate topic; SMEs were not allowed to listen to discussions to learn 1st hand what was communicated or what questions or issues were raised.
719 Scientific integrity under the Trump administration at EPA from Pruitt to Darwin took a back seat to the will of industry. The rollback of regulations meant to protect the public and environment and the mass exodus of personnel under their tenure will take years to recover from.
720 First and foremost there should be science then we can talk about scientific integrity, Under the circumstances, what scientific integrity, one is talking about? The agency for the most part makes decision depending upon the regulated entities data and science. We also lack to corelate our science with health and the risk associated with the pollutants. We are less science and more of a political bureaucratic agency rigged in cronyism, nepotism and discrimination
721 Obsequious lick-spittle senior career leaders and lower level political appointees didn't do enough to buck the anti-science cult of senior political appointees. [redacted]
722
These survey questions assume that the political bias or suppression of scientific integrity always comes from the political appointees or policy makers, but it also can come from within, from the scientific staff themselves, some of whom have very strong policy and outcome preferences. After all some scientists chose a career at EPA over other careers due to personal passion for the environment, understandably so. This passion can manifest in a bias to support the pro-environment outcome over competing concerns or legal constraints, even when the science does not require it. Much of the other staff (non-scientists) share this passion, so they do not question or complain when scientific results are skewed in a pro-environment direction; they may not even know or notice. When this passion is separated from the science, some will complain and say that scientific integrity is being suppressed or harmed. Of course, that suppression can and does actually happen sometimes, but I assume you will receive many survey results telling that narrative, so I thought it was important you heard this one too.
723 HQTS/Washington micromanaged work. Otherwise, EPA as a whole maintained scientific integrity.
724 In the past, tuition reimbursement and other circumstances led to opportunities to grow in education more so than the last two years

725 Blatant disregard for the truth at the highest levels created a toxic atmosphere for science and truth/data based decision making.
726 Who guards the guards?
727 Need to support more the participation in professional organizations
728 Integrity of the science supported for study was generally good. But certain subjects needed to develop a full understanding of ecosystem health were not supported for study. So the integrity of some final scientific assessments were compromised.
729 At times, there has been resistance to pursuing a different approach to getting products (risk assessments) completed such as more innovative ways of presenting findings. Those approaches were later incorporated into new templates, so this is kind of a story for both support and a lack of support.
730 During the prior administration (2018-2020), there were many examples of the lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity in (b) (6) and EPA. I provided those examples in my previous responses, including (b) (6) political leadership creating a hostile environment, (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
731 I think generally EPA has support for scientific integrity, but the culture of scientific integrity only goes as far as the strength of the scientific integrity program and its ability to navigate the career and political dynamics at the Agency. If the last several years has shown, the SI program likely needs to be revamped to ensure its rigidity in the face of pervasive challenges.
732 I think it's great that as an Agency we espouse things like "scientific integrity".... "open and honest communication".... "transparency"... but I've seen a huge departure from all of these things, especially when it comes to our role in communicating science to the public, in the past four years and it continues still today. I get the impression that management, while they may not have liked the directive at the time, have become "comfortable" where we are now given how long it took to get here. (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
733 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
734 Political appointees that were nothing more than industry lackeys are not supportive of scientific integrity and do not support a culture of scientific integrity Agency-wide
735 I feel that since 2017, the previous administration has been anti science from the beginning and made things worst across the board.
736 In (b) (6) management from my first line supervisor through my Division Director are excellent at supporting scientific integrity. They always expect good science to be brought to them and made appropriate decisions based on it, over the past two years and now. However, once any issue moved above that level during 2019-2020, it was a political guessing game as to what would happen. Decisions were often not based on human health risks.
737 Our scientific advisory councils work to facilitate scientific integrity.
738 (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
739 When EPA is sued, it is complicated to provide products that are not highly controlled
740 Science is the foundation of EPA's mission to protect public health and the environment. However, over the previous 2 years under the previous administration, it appears that science and individuals who produce and interpret science were excluded from many important EPA decisions, relegating the process to serving special interests and not the country nor its citizens and inhabitants.
741 None
742 In my case, I think it was my first line supervisor. I don't if she had support or not.
743 There some emergence technical issues of high visibility and controversy that decisions are not made on the issues such as (b) (5) vs. beneficial use.
744 1. One prerequisite of a culture of scientific integrity is scientific competence. EPA could do a better job of ensuring staff are trained and competent for their jobs. This could take the form of more formal training needs assessments that can direct staff's annual training plan. This is important as the agency transitions to a younger workforce. There has been a lack of support for rigorous training and assessment of the workforce. 2. Current management (30+ years of experience) learned on the job and many times invented programs as their careers progressed. Many current managers do not understand the challenge or opportunity of training new staff. Just because they learned on the job, doesn't mean that is the best model for 2021. If it takes 5-10 years for staff to become proficient, the agency will be less effective for all of the 2030s.
745 For one project, (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]. The integrity of lab personnel (analysts and management), combined with the patience of the agents and attorneys were vital to the successful outcome of this project.
746 A lot of decisions are based on politics and then staff are asked to use science to support their decisions. I've seen this most frequently with the transition from one Administration to another. (b) (6) [redacted]. To my knowledge, decisions haven't been made about reversing or changing regulations. When they are though, it is important that the science isn't ignored. Just because something occurred during a previous Administration, doesn't mean that the science was faulty.
747 Scientists are sometimes asked to support Agency decisions in situations where critical data which could reasonably be obtained has not been obtained. I recognize that a perfectly complete data set is an unrealistic standard, particularly for an agency regulating at the edge of the unknown. (b) (5), (b) (6) [redacted]
748 My management focuses on science and data and transparency
749 My immediate supervisor always listens to my opinions on scientific integrity and most of the time supports my recomendations.
750 (b) (5) [redacted] White House completely disregarded science, EPA highlighted the news as corrupt science, morale at a career low...what else needs to be said?
751 Lack of inquisitiveness from higher level management on the means for which public health and the environment are effected.
752 fellow staff in other offices are very supportive, mgmt seems neutral and mostly concerned with whether the science supports the state government preferences so they can approve submittals which is understandable bc they are under a lot of pressure from political leadership to keep stakeholders happy
753 (b) (5) [redacted].
754 I have no real basis to judge many of these questions because I began work (b) (6) at EPA in (b) (6). So, while I do not remember scientific integrity being a huge emphasis or having EPA- or (b) (6) conversations about scientific integrity and its importance, I am not sure how often the agency typically advertises or emphasizes scientific integrity. I can only suggest that we have more frequent programming that emphasizes the importance of science and its integrity to the work the agency does.
755 This is not in my field of work.
756 I don't have any experience with science. I'm involved in (b) (6)
757 What the last 2 years, 2019 & 2020, demonstrated to me was that science was politicized and integrity at EPA was greatly lost. Even when we were doing outreach about good science, communities were skeptical, based on EPA's decisions that were based on politics and not good, solid science. EPA scientists were undermined, staff's decisions or recommendations that were based on science on work like cleanups were sidelined, subject to political decisions. As an EPA employee, it was damaging to my morale and my faith in the agency when I saw decisions politicized and good science dismissed. The past 4 years showed that, if EPA had been able to maintain scientific integrity despite the political shifts in administrations, this integrity was shattered by the politics of the last 4 years. Communities have lost faith in EPA and we have a lot of work to build up that trust. My hope is that EPA can demonstrate its scientific integrity once again, by bolstering the science-based work of its staff. (b) (6) [redacted]. For some decisions that weren't (thankfully because they weren't subject to scrutiny by political appointees at higher levels), the public often still didn't trust us and wondered how much politics had influenced the decision. It was demoralizing.
758 (b) (5) [redacted]
759 In (b) (6) of employment at EPA, I cannot think of an example in which scientific integrity was not supported by my Regional office. Questionable policies involving scientific integrity have sometimes come from the HQ leadership under administrations that placed higher value on economic development.
760 (b) (5) [redacted]
761 Last Administration had a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity. Current Administration demonstrate a culture of scientific integrity.
762 There appeared to be political reasons for policy changes in the air program during the last administration that conflicted with scientific reason.
763 The political appointees during 2019 and 2020 were very clearly driven by political agendas and undermined and twisted scientific integrity at every turn. (b) (5) [redacted]
764 None.

765 Political opinions of political appointees was a factor in selecting research projects for funding in [redacted]
766
For 2019-2020, political appointees affected decisions that should have been made based on science and resources. Instead, some decisions appeared to be driven by political forces.
767
One experience in particular made me feel like the culture of scientific integrity was lacking. As I mentioned in a previous comment, [redacted] Otherwise, in general at the agency level, I think it's safe to say there were grave compromises in integrity due to politics.
768 Science is typically extremely important to EPA and I'm glad it is again.
769 There has been much support by 1st line supervisors as well as the division directors.
770
Unlike during the early 1990's, there is no support within [redacted] to assist [redacted]
771 I believe (despite the previous administration) that integrity is improving in our agency. There is work that I inherited that had questionable decision making in the 1990's and 2000's [redacted] I think there is more scrutiny today and I am thankful.
772 None
773 Restriction of sharing of information that occurred during the prior administration resulted in a lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity.
774
[redacted]
775 Strongly varies based on the political bias for/against the science in decision making.
776 The Trump administration's politics undermined science and EPA's mission. Obviously.
777 Commitment
778 Mass emails supporting the scientific integrity within the Agency.
779 [redacted]
780 I have no experience to make a judgement
781 Generally speaking, I find that there is a decent level of support with respect to scientific integrity in my division and program office. [redacted]
782 [redacted]
783
[redacted]
784 In general, it seems like decisions made by appointed or senior-level career officials tend to be based more on politics and appearance, rather than protecting the environment or following science. The Agency seems to have become more and more reactive, focusing on remediation and restoration rather than environmental PROTECTION, because there is more certainty in identifying something that IS contaminated, rather than preventing harm. We should follow what the science predicts more and wait for impacts less; scientific integrity is about more than identifying a problem that already occurred. Scientific integrity should help us identify those situations that have the potential to become a problem and prevent it. It seems most decisions are based on politics, not science, until a very clear, very real problem already exists.
785 Plenty of training opportunities were made available to me by my management and colleagues.
786 Lack of support for culture of scientific integrity- decision making and transparency around issuing S [redacted]
787 There appeared to be many reversals of previous held opinions by scientists and the disbanding of the science advisory board and putting in more pro-Industry groups spoke to an agenda to the findings. I was inherently skeptical of national decisions as they related to science.
788 No example to provide
789 The number of webinars, conferences, and tours that are sponsored by the [redacted] is disproportionate to other forms of education.
790 All the individual scientists and staff I know operate from a place of scientific integrity. Support for-
791 I have yet to meet a technical staff person who didn't want to do the best work possible within the regulatory framework allowed. Typically 1st line and 2nd line supervisors (section and branch chiefs) are highly supportive of the work their staff do. When you get to Division Director's and other senior leaders, there's just often too much politics at play where state, local, and tribal senior leaders seem to have the ears of our senior leaders and have great success over influencing outcomes of various work and decisions that are made on scientific data collected, analyzed and evaluated. This happens regardless of which political party controls the environmental narrative du jour.
792 I've been able to share my findings with managements support.
793 Examples have been provided earlier. When the Agency is fearful of sharing what they are doing, what decisions are being made in program offices, when they are fearful of speaking to stakeholders, when they stop staff from putting together rigorous agendas sharing the status of agency decisions that impact children's health, there is no integrity. The sense is that of drowning in office processes pushed by political appointees and carried out to an even more zealous degree by the office director.
794 While at EPA, I have conducted [redacted] to support EPA mission to protect the environment and human well being.
795 I do think that as time continues the agency establishes more and more ways to improve or track or quantify various activities. While growth and improvement are beneficial for any agency mission, the work load has also increased tremendously. Nothing ever gets removed for one's job functions. It seems the job functions only increase. However, my supervisors and managers have always been supportive.
796 We were told that decisions would be made at the [redacted] level and our scientific or other opinions or knowledge were not needed.
797 I have been at EPA for over [redacted]. I recall times (e.g., under [redacted] etc) when science reps were always at the table in EPA decision meetings. Scientists were explicitly asked to provide their input and opinions. This has eroded over time and during the [redacted] Administration was poor.
798 In my previous position, my managers were not very supportive when it came to the culture of scientific integrity at the EPA; however, I see a big difference since I have moved to [redacted]. The change in Administration is also apparent in the vast improvements overall within the Agency. My colleagues and I are happy to see the recent positive changes and strong support, particularly when they claimed that "science is back!" I marvel at what a different working environment it has become now.
799
[redacted]
800
The Trump administration generally made the standards of the [redacted] The EPA tries for scientific integrity, but the U.S. President and Political Appointees have a strong influence.
801 The prior administration had a different agenda and it was not in line with the Agency's mission. They removed 40 members of scientific advisory panels appointed under the Obama administration in an effort to walk back much needed regulations.
802 There has always been an atmosphere of support for scientific integrity at the Agency. I have not experience any issues during my years here at EPA
803 Not familiar with.
804 Always based decisions objectively on the science without pressure to use subjective measures
805
There can be a lot of pressure to deliver scientific justification for decision in a short time period. If the product does not provide support the decision, it may never be finalized or asked to be delivered.
806
I have experienced so many instances of lack of thorough review of work products/policies that in the end did not go out the door well vetted or researched and as a result, ultimately ended up yielding less than ideal results or required additional level of effort to try to get to the level of quality that should have been there in the first places, costing the aAgency and taypayers time and money and delaying protection of human health and the environment. The Agency should institute some guideline protocol for scientific integrity and work product/policy review and there should be much more comparison with state and local as well as international corollaries. - Would ultimately yield much more profound and well considered work products and policy decisions and regulatory approaches.
807 I don't know anything about it.
808 The past four years have been very difficult to support scientific integrity but before that time in the last decade there has been tremendous support.
809 Plenty of trainings available. Management is somewhat available to talk thru ideas and provide transparent feedback.
810 already answered

811 My supervisor has made huge efforts in trying to hire more experts but they are scarce within EPA. My supervisor and our team care about the decisions being based in scientific data and analyses, but we are limited by the lack of access to experts.

812 In my opinion, the (b) (6) in which I have worked for over (b) (6), has always used the best science available in making regulatory decisions.

813 The Trump Administration was actively hostile towards career staff and was determined to destroy the agency. A fox guarding the henhouse is an understatement. Executives from the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries (Murray Coal, DOW Chemical, etc.) were given control of the agency. This was to be expected. What was far more corrosive and will do far more long-term damage to the agency was the response (or lack thereof) by Career EPA staff.

814 The recent (b) (5) It's a relief to hear this is going to be revaluated, but the back and forth between administrations is exhausting.

815 I have only heard supporting comments for scientific integrity from fellow co-workers and supervisor's.

816 career EPA staff are trying to do the right thing under the laws written by Congress emerging contaminants have been a challenge that the agency has lived up to

817 N/A

818 (b) (5), (b) (6)

819 There was a significant lack of support for a culture of scientific integrity. Policy objectives were defined and the science was developed and/or manipulated to achieve the policy objective.

820 I have only experienced the unfortunate situation where completing an activity was more important than the scientific rigor involved in decision making. I mention this with a sad heart. The only reasoning I see that caused this was project time was limited by (b) (6) overseers to get to a decision which could have been made with a minor amount of additional time.

821 I know at least a dozen current and former (b) (6) staff who have privately shared their discomfort with speaking out about deficiencies in (b) (5), (b) (6) because of the consequences of doing so (e.g., getting sidelined by management, being excluded from important meetings, or even being reassigned). I have serious concerns about the culture that senior management in (b) (6) have created over the last decade, because it does not foster honest and open discussion.

822 Political management didn't seem interested in understanding strengths and limitations of scientific information used to inform the decision making process. Policy decisions were supported with scientific claims that were not empirically verified, despite opportunities to do so. Claims about best practices in certain scientific fields completely erroneous.